SHRI SAI THE SUPERMAN

By

Swami Sai Sharan Anand

With a Foreword by

Shri P. M. Mody, M. A., Ph D.

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Illustrations

Foreword

(By—Shri P M Mody, M A., Ph D., Retired Professor and Principal, Shamaldas College, Bhavnagar)

Works on Sai Baba are not many. Looking to the vast number of the followers of Sai Baba who belong not only to the different States of India but also to so many countries all the world over, this new contribution in English to the Life and Teachings of Sai Baba, is most welcome A book like the present one, written, not by a mere student of Sai Baba, but by a lawyer-philosopher who has been a direct disciple of Sai Baba and who has renounced all worldly glory in pursuit of his discipleship of the Saint-God, the authority of a Gospel of the saint-God of Shirdi.

Pujya Swami Sai Sharananandji has done well in adopting the style of narrating, as it were. short stories as they happened. It gives a living touch to the characters and the view-points of Sai Baba's Teaching, illustrated by the facts recorded. The work appeals to the reader without any further argument than the mere fact of its being a record of facts.

The reader of this book will also find here for the first time some stories of Baba's devotees both contemporary with Baba and later found in other similar work in English. Pujya Swamiji has

first hand knowledge of these and they would at once convince the reader that Baba is even now and always with us In this sense the present work is an up-to-date account of the teaching of Baba.

Baba's Teaching has many aspects. It is Universal and free from any distinctions of caste or community or creed or sect Baba's devotees belong to all Religions and all communities, as is amply shown in this book Baba leads His devotee in and through his wordly difficulties of multiple variety, which He solves for him in His Own Mystic Method Baba's help comes to **him who merely seeks His help sincerely.** Though there cannot be degrees of sincerity, yet Baba's response to the devotee's call for help is as eager as ardent and as urgent as the devotee's call itself Once a man is Baba's devotee, He looks after him life after life till he qualifies himself for Eternal Peace under His care. Baba has shown by practical demonstrations how there is ONE LIVING SPIRIT in all, apparently distinct and diverse beings, not of any particular caste or creed, nor even all human beings, but in all beings that breathe. This is real Universal Brotherhood. In this respect Baba's mystic demonstrations were more practical, more complete and more perceptible than that of any scientist like Sir Jagadishchandra Bose Shirdi was the Divine Centre **proving** with positive proofs main philosophical

and religious truths taught in the Scriptures of All Nations, not by any commentaries on the Scriptures but by practical, visual, convincing demonstrations of these truths before all who wanted it sincerely and devoutly and even before those who wanted to test it before believeing it. After Baba's departure from Shirdi He has made His demonstrations available to all seekers **in all places.** It must be added that Baba never liked any intermediary between Himself and His devotee.

All the above aspects and many more of Baba's Life and Teaching and His Blessing of mankind are amply brought out in simple language and are illustrated by examples in the various chapters of this fresh contribution to Sai Baba Literature We find full justice done in topics like (1) Supernatural Powers utilised by Sai Baba to bestow spiritual welfare through material welfare upon His devotees (2) His control over the Elements of Nature (3) Sai Baba showing the Unity of All Religions and all religious sects by manifesting in Himself **all forms of Godhend** and at the same time retaining all of them instead of denying their usefulness for the benefit of humanity (4) Exhibiting physically how **all** life in all beings is **one** and how the devotees should practise this fundamental doctrine of the highest religion There is no end to the kinds and numbers of diffi-

culties and diseases which could be and **can be even now solved and removed** by **simply seeking** Baba's help with full self-surrender and sincere prayers offered to Baba, as will be seen from these Chapters. One Chapter (XI) is devoted to the **implied meaning** in the various items of the daily routine of Baba's life and the distribution of Udi by Baba as well as in Baba's demanding money gifts from His-Devotees. That Baba's daily life establishes the Unity of the rites and ceremonies of All Religions of the world and also the happy Harmony of Gnan, Karma, Bhakti and Dhyana as means to spiritual Progress; that Baba's play-song **" Ramte Ram Ayoji, Udiyanki Gonia Layoji "** suggests the unfailing effect of the Udi, just as Rama's arrow never failed to hit the aim, that demand of money-gifts had different meanings in the case of different devotees:— these views of the author would, I believe, be acceptable to many of Baba's devotees.

All these fresh records of Baba's life and fresh explanations of the inner meanings of His Mystic actions and utterances come from the pen of one who is best fitted to describe the events and express his views in such matters, by his direct contact with the Saint God, by his spiritual and intellectual achievements resulting from that con-

tact. and by his sanctity, and piety of life Thus, the book is an important contribution to world's religious literature.

The above words of mine, please note, are not from a judge who certifies, but they come from an humble devotee of Sai Baba, seeking shelter from Sai Baba and offering this Pushpanjali (Gift of word flowers) at the lotus — like feet of His Holiness Shri Sai Baba May it please and propitiate Sai Baba and also the devotees of Sai Baba the readers of this Gospel With Pranamas to all.

P. M. Modi.

Preface.

"Shri Sai Baba" has to-day become a household word throughout the length and breadth of this country of pristine glory. Shri Sai Baba sacrificed His life to save a scion of the family of his ardent devotee as far back as the year 1918 and yet even to-day after a lapse of more than 43 years, He still continues to be the living force guiding the lives of millions and millions, helping them in their difficulties and saving them from all types of miseries, material as well as spiritual which beset all finite human beings. His devotees have ever been feeling His presence in all that they do and as a result thereof they enjoy that supreme bliss and peace of mind, the object of pursuit of people of all times and countries. This book cites a few of the numerous such experiences of His devotees bespeaking of His Supernatural powers and it is this that stands at the root of His present day eminence

Shri Sai Baba's devotees belong to all races, castes and creeds, their faith and devotion are the indispensable factors earning for them the benign experiences they are having, devotional fervour and love of God as well have drawn Baba to them



Shri Sai Sharan Anand Swami
(Vamanrao P Patel)

and these elements have been securing to them the succour they always need in their lives.

Persons who have never contacted saints of this Highest class of supernatural beings are likely to doubt the genuineness of the experience of the devotees described in the books. To them I might state that, all that I had seen heard and experienced during my eleven month's continuous stay at Shirdi in the year 1913 stand as sure gurantee of the veracity of these experiences; but if these are not deemed sufficient in the eyes of a real truth seeking lover of sciences, we may point out to him, that Doctor Connon, Monsieur Coho the spiritualist as also the New Laboratory and Nation Laboratory of England have as a result of their psychical research proved that persons who have human divine powers—supermen—can control not only the human finite beings but also the gross elements constituting this world Our Yogānushasan and Patanjali's Sankhya also point to the same truths.

Even to-day though Shri Sai Baba has cast off His mortal coil, people worshipping Him and running down to Shirdi have the same experiences. This book is therefore an invitation, so to speak, to all seekers of Truth to place themselves in spiritual contact with Sai Baba and by unfaltering faith in and devotion towards Him to attain that

oneness with Him which shall enable them to alleviate and remove the sufferings of thousands and thousands of persons of this universe

I owe a debt of gratitude to Shri Babubhai Dixit for furnishing me necessary typed copies of the manuscripts of this book free of charge. May the Almighty shower His Blessings on him for this

Sai Sharan Anand

Kalupur Khajuri Pole,
"Sharda Sadan"
Ahmedabad-1.
April, 1962.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

We are glad to place in the hands of the Sai devotees the long awaited second edition of the book "Shri Sai the Superman" written by Shri Sai Sharan Anand. The first edition of the book was published in April 1962 and is out of print. Sai devotees have been constantly enquiring about this book. We are sure that this book will be earnestly welcomed by all Sai devotees.

Due to modesty, which is bound to be a part and parcel of such a great personality as Shri Sai Sharan Anand, he has not written anything about himself in his preface to the first edition. It will not, however, be out of place to write here a few words about the illustrious author of this book.

Shri Wamanbhai Patel is the original name of Shri Sai Sharan Anand, which name he assumed after taking Sanyas in 1953. He was born in 1889 in a small village in Bardoli Taluka of the Gujarat State. His family resources were not plenty, still the family was much advanced in learning. All the members of his family were well-educated.

As a boy of seven to eight years, Shri Wamanbhai had the opportunity to visit the temple of Somnath. There, outside the temple, he saw one Fakir. Thereafter in the region round about the temple, he saw that same Fakir several times. Ultimately, when he visited Shirdi in 1911, he was

surprised to find the identity of Shri Sai Baba to be the same as that of the Fakir, he met at Somnath.

Shri Wamanbhai was married at the age of thirteen, as per the custom of those days After that he prosecuted all his higher studies in Bombay. In 1910, he passed the B.A. Examination from the Elphinstone College. He likewise passed the LL B. Examination in 1912. As mentioned above. Shri Wamanbhai had already visited Shirdi in 1911 and from that time he became a constant visitor to Shirdi. After passing the LL.B. examination. Shri Wamanbhai had the ambition to become a Solicitor. Hence he joined a Solicitor's firm. In 1913 when the courts closed for the May vacation. Shri Wamanbhai went to Shirdi. After the vacation was over he wanted to return to Bombay. but Shri Sai Baba did not allow him to return to Bombay for nearly a year.

In 1916, he had once gone to the station to wish some of his friends who were going to Shirdi. but at the station he had inspiration to go to Shirdi and he went there only with the clothes he had on his body. He stayed there for twenty-one days and to his surprise he found that Shri Baba was waiting for him During this stay at Shirdi, once when he was standing near Buty wada, one

stone came rolling from above and hit Wamanbhai on the head. He became unconscious for some time. When Baba knew about this, He immediately sent a medicine, which helped Shri Wamanbhai to come to senses immediately.

For three to four years after the aforesaid incident, Shri Wamanbhai worked as Principal of the Model High School at Ahmedabad. However, this service could not attract him, so he came back to Bombay in 1921 and took the job of the Managing clerk in the solicitor's firm running under the name of M/s Kanga and Sayani Though Shri Wamanbhai was thus having ups and downs in his life, still he always continued to visit and pray Sai Baba. During the period from 1911 to 1918, till the time of Baba's Samadhi, Shri Wamanbhai had ample opportunities to have Baba's company of which he took the best advantage.

With a view to spreading the devotion to Shri Sai Baba in Gujarat, Shri Wamanbhai wrote in 1946 a book of nearly four hundred pages in Gujarati under the caption "Shri Sai Baba". This book is so popular among the Gujarati speaking community that as many as six editions of this book have been sold out so far. In order to encourage the spread of religion and righteousness among the masses, Shri Wamanbai Patel wrote a

number of books on religious and philisophical subjects, which were published by "The Sastu Sahitya Wardhak" publishing institution of Ahmedabad. Shankaracharya, Manushvadharma, Sati Savitri, Shri Prahlad, Ambarish, Shukadeo, Gajendra Moksha, Saint Dnyanadeo, etc., are a few of his books.

Shri Sai Sharan Anand is a staunch devotee of Shri Sai Baba He has hence mastered fully the teachings of Shri Sai Baba viz. faith and saburi. He therefore kept complete faith in Shri Sai Baba. continued all his multifarious activities and awaited to attain his goal viz to become a Solicitor. In 1923, Shri Wamanbhai passed the Solicitor's examination and started to work as a Solicitor. For some time he also worked as a lecturer in the Law College at Ahmedabad

The Sai devotees had decided to install a marble statue of Shri Sai Baba in the Samadhi Mandir at Shirdi. The work of carving the statue was, therefore, entrusted to the famous sculptor, Shri Balaji Vasant Talim of Bombay. This statue was installed in the Samadhi Mandir at the auspicious hands of Shri Sai Sharan Anand (i.e. Shri Wamanbhai Patel, B.A , LL.B., Solicitor) in 1952.

Though Shri Sai Sharan Anand has completed eighty-five years of his age. he is quite active and

devotes a lot of time in reading, writing and thinking . In 1953, he took Sanyas and started using the saffron-coloured garments. He now lives only for the good of others. The authorities of the Shirdi Sansthan wish Shri Sai Sharan Anand a very long life and express their heartfelt thanks to him for having placed the entire rights of this book in their hands.

In his Foreword, Dr. P. M. Mody, retired Professor and Principal, Shamaldas College, Bhavnagar, has fully dealt with the merits of this book and has pointed out its utility in a scholarly manner. It would, therefore, be redundant to express our opinion about the contents of this book. We, however, hope that it will be welcomed by the Sai Devotees very gladly.

K. S. Pathak,

Court Receiver, Shirdi Sansthan
Of Shri Sai Baba.

Shri Sai The Superman

Chapter One

BIRTH, RACE AND FAMILY

Though I am unborn, whole soul, Lord of all creatures, taking to my life-nature, I manifest myself by my powers. Bh. Gita 4-6.

The self same soul has transformed Himself principally into the Sun, the Moon, Brahma the creator, Vishnu the protector, Shiva Shakti the Destroyer with His Goddess. I bow to that excellent light of lights.

My salutations to that Bhagwant, Lord who is free from anger, attachment, above Maya and devoid of three states of wakefulness, dream and sleep. The best of gods, ascetics do not know the farther end of Your Maya Power. The demons were most powerful, you forced them to give up their egotism When the world is beset with worst calamities, you manifest yourself and come upon this earth, Oh Lord

Vallabh Bhagwat IV, VIII Chs 7 & 17.

The Primordial, original, perfect Reality, the Thing-In-Itself beyond name and form inspired

by the force of devotee's religious merit automatically manifested itself as Sai Nath, Sai Baba for the purpose of leading the lost souls to the path of Truth When asked. His only reply was "Brahma is my father. Maya is my mother and this Universe is my house." That He descended on this earth through some human mortals has not yet been established through reliable sources. No conflict of opinion exists however as to His being an extra-ordinary incarnation of God or the highest of perfect beings.

Brahman by His Maya Power manifests itself as a human being, when irreligion stalks unchecked in this world. He comes and places religion on sound foundations dispelling the clouds of doubts and dogmatism He descends in particular to protect the good, the saintly and to destroy the bad and the wicked.

Though beyond (above) limitations of time, space, causation, body, mind, intellect etc pure Brahman, has by his Maya power the capacity of assuming such form—male or female—as would satisfy the devotees' desires and their ideals. It is ever ready to please its real devotee in this respect and even serves him incognito. Saints who have attained oneness with this Brahman that is who have ceased to be bodily minded, who have without their knowledge transformed themselves

into Brahman by constant meditation on the same are Brahman with all its Powers. स यो ह्वै etc. (Mundak Up. 3-2-9).

Shri Sai Baba falls in this category and so His devotees have seen in Him their ideal of God realised and so they have described Him in as many different ways as their ideals of Guru or God have differed. To staunch devotees of Shri Ram, Shri Sai appeared as Ram, to those of Shanker, Maruti, Krishna, Vithoba, Akkalkot Swami, Gholap Swami and Ali Shri Sai appeared in the form of Shanker, Maruti, Krishna, Vithoba, Akkalkot Swami, Gholap Swami and Ali irrespective of their race, caste, creed or religion. They all look upon Sai as their God, Saviour, or Prophet and worship Him as such in their own way, propitiate Him and crave blessings from Him As an out-come of this propitiation each one of them feels and realises that he has been lucky enough to find in Him his benign father, protector, benefactor, a helper in distress, a safe refuge amidst the turbulent waters of this world. Each one has realised He is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent.

Recipients of such experiences seldom care to ascertain how and whence this rarity descended upon this earth, who His blessed parents were, who His master or teacher was, and yet there are amongst intelligent educated devotees some per-

sons who have bestowed much labour and done a deal of research to hit upon proper and satisfactory answers on these points

Vedanti devotees of Baba Shri Sai look upon Him as the manifestation of knowledge incarnate, the joyful Brahman, the giver of highest happiness free from dualities, ether like, knowable by the four Maha Vakyas (Key-Sentences) of Vedas the sole, the permanent, the pure, non-changing, the Universal witnessing Intellect, the one beyond emotions and the three gunas--pure, mixed, and impure—tendencies, the Master, teacher of Reality The non-Mohamaden devotees of this class firmly believe that if Shri Baba had adopted Hindu Mohamaden mixed ways of life and prayers, it was simply for the purpose of drawing the attention of these devotees to the cardinal truth, that the soul has no caste or race; that their object of proper worship is not of any caste, and what are castes? They are not skin, blood, flesh nor bones, but these castes are fixed for the purpose of the smooth running of this world Hindu devotees of Baba particularly, Brahmins and other Dwijas believe that if Baba had donned Mohamaden garb and adopted some Mahomaden ways of worship (without giving up the ways of the purest of pure Brahmin sages) it was for the purpose of killing or removing the wrong interpretation of Veda and

drawing attention to the truth that everything—all without exception—is Brahman; that difference or diversity or duality does not exist; that if Veda says that Brahmins are God's mouth, Kshatriyas His hands, Vaishyas His body and Shudras His legs, the intention of the Vedas is not to show the inferiority or superiority of any one of these castes but to draw attention to the fact, that each is a part and parcel of the same Holy body of God Similarly about the genesis of races; if one Upnishad states that Non-Aryans came from the nether part of God, it is to root out the hatred and bitterness that might have been raging between these races and to rivet the attention on the oneness of the Holy Body from whom the Non-Aryans have also emerged. Vedas and Upnishads teach us to look at the unity in diversity and preach only oneness of Soul, no difference. dissention. discord but unity. Peace and accord is the burthen of the Veda, Upnishads and Vedanta Veda and Upnishads have no doubt prescribed worships of different Gods. but these are only for persons who hanker after material happiness and are not satisfied with mere realisation of Truth. Baba called upon persons of the latter class to follow His directions to achieve the ends of their material desires and they had their desires fulfilled. His guidance and His sole worship have obtained for these

devotees what they desired and in this way also He encouraged one worship and not multiple worship. Viewing Vedas, Upnishads and Baba's ways, Vedanti devotees have always believed that to root out the ego of caste pride and to teach them the oneness of all pervading all-knowing, all powerful God, irrespective of race, caste, or creed, Baba adopted the special ways of life that He did. In fact His life laid stress on the essentials of religions, discarding the non-essential parts thereof.

Most of the devotees of Shri Sai Baba fall under this class. The late Hon'ble Hari Sitaram Dixit B.A., LL.B., solicitor, the late Shri Nana Saheb Chandorkar, B.A., Ex-District Deputy Collector, the late Shri Anna Saheb Dabholkar, the learned author of Shri Sai Satcharit, the late Rao Bahadur Moreshwar Pradhan, J.P., ex-member of the Bombay Legislative Council, the late Shri G. S. Khaparde, B.A., LL.B., ex-member of the Bombay Legislative Assembly, the late Rao Saheb Yeshwantrao G. Galvankar B.A. Shri M. B. Rege, Indore Judge as also the Sai Baba Sansthan Committee members of 1953 held and hold this view.

There are other devotees who have been worshipping some other deities or are followers of some other religious teachers—all these see in Sai Baba their own deity, or their own religious teacher and worship Him for the realisation of

truth through Him, Sai Baba. Worshippers of Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Vithal, Pandurang, Ramchandra, Goddesses, Guru Dattatraya, Swami Akkalkot. Swami Gholap etc., all come under this category. Baba actually assumed the form of these gods and goddesses and satisfied the devotees of these gods and goddesses. For the disciple of Gholap Swami, He assumed the form of the Sanyasi Gholapswami and of that intent of His, He gave an inkling to his other devotees by asking them to fetch for Him (Gerua) redochre clay. Devotees of Swami Akkalkot identify Him with Akkalkot Swami from what He said to Shri Pitale of Bombay, "I have already given you Rs. 2, take these three more, keep them safe" Pitale's father had been given Rs 2/- by Akkalkot Swami, and so the reference that Baba gave those two rupees, unequivocally stating that He Himself had given him those two rupees, clearly goes to indicate that He Himself was none other than the Swami of Akkalkot Some Devotees of Guru Dattatraya trace the pedigree of Akkalkot Swami to Guru Dattatraya through Nrisinha Swami, the last incarnation of Guru Dattatraya Other devotees of Guru Dattatraya state that Shri Akkalkot Swami was the contemporary of Shri Manik Prabhu, the well-known incarnation of Guru Dattatraya and that it is an undisputed fact that

Shri Sai Baba was none other than Swami Shri of Akkalkot Shri Baba was therefore an incarnation of Shri Guru Dattatraya We have nothing to state against this theory of Shri Baba being an incarnation of Dattatraya but we simply state that a person is what he is not because he can be shown to be a member of the high pedigree of certain Gods or gurus, since they are born great, the high pedigree could not in any way go to make them greater Apart from this as well they are great, not only great but none in human form could be greater, none can surpass them These remarks equally apply to devotees who trace Sai Baba to the Nine Masters, Matsyendranath, Gorakhanath and others Some of Baba's prominent devotees hold the same view.

(1) One Shri Ganpatrao Dattatrya Sahasrabuddhe alias Das Ganu actually seeing the holy Ganges trickling down from Shri Sai's feet in a small stream, just when he desired to have a dip in the holy river, in the fervour of his love for Baba, composed a prayer describing Baba as Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (i e Gods of creation, protection and destruction).

(2) Another personage of this class is the great Upasani Maharaj. In the course of his three years' stay at Shirdi, he was fully convinced that Shri Baba had not only realised Brahman but had been

(become) perfect Brahman and so in the fervour of that enthusiasm he composed a prayer of several hymns on Sai Baba, the first verse of which said, "Baba was the original Sat Chit Anand Swarup, the primordial cause of original existence and destruction of the Universe and that Baba had appeared (Manifested Himself) as a human being as the outcome of the ardent desire of His devotees to see Him as such." The recurring burthen of the eight verses of this prayer is, "I bow to that God-Sadguru Sai Baba" In the eighth verse of the said prayer he declares Sai Baba to be "The unborn, The veritable Brahman." Looking to the most important task of moulding and regenerating the lives of thousands of males and females (by imparting to them godly knowledge) that awaited him in future Shri Sai Baba got him to practise severe penance for three years at Shirdi and awarded him in return powers of clairvvance, assuming all forms at will becoming invisible, at will etc. etc. which subsequently drew to him people in thousands. He did appreciate all this and to show this, going to Benaras with his devotees he performed the obsequial ceremony of Baba and other bygone saints spending thousands of rupees.

(3) Another great devotee is the late lamented Shri B. V. Narsinha Swamiji, a law graduate and

an ex-member of the Legislative Council, author of the lives of several saints, who had dedicated the last 29 years of his life to spreading the name and fame of Shri Sai Baba throughout the length and breadth of Madras He declares that Baba was born of Brahmin parents of Pathri--a village of Nizam Hyderabad and then he was given over to a Fakir for being trained.

(4) Shri Sathya-Sai-Baba, who claims to be a re-incarnation of Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, states that as Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi, he was born at Pathri on the banks of the Godavari of very pious parents and that as a result of Shri Shanker's boon they got Him, but that at the time He was born, both the parents had got so much detached from the world that they left the Sai Baba child under a tree to the mercy of God and went away to practise penance. A childless Fakir couple passing by the way picked up and brought Him up as their child When however the little Sai Baba grew up, He was found so much attached to the worship of Shanker's Shivaling that the Fakir drove him away, so he came to Shirdi and settled down there. (Life of Shri Sathya Sai Baba Part I by N Kasturi, Pages 210 to 216, 2nd edition)

(5) Another personage Madhvanath a great saint also told his disciple that Shri Sai Baba was the eldest of the three sons of a Yajurvedi Deshasth

Brahmin of Pathri and that he was handed over to a Fakir, for the parents thought that the sons born to them were the outcome of the blessings that the then childless parents had received from that Fakir in lieu of the services rendered by them for him.

Shri Sai Baba's own utterances in this respect should also be considered.

(1) The oldest, most pious and revered devotee of Shri Sai Baba the late Shri Mhalsapati, who had the unique honour of sleeping with Baba on every alternate night for 30 to 40 years in the Dwarkamayi said that Baba had once told him. "I am a Brahmin of Pathri and when young, my parents gave me over to a Fakir for being trained under him."

(2) In December 1912 when the writer went to Shirdi, he was anxious about his father's life, as the father had dropsy and dropsy was in those days considered to be a fatal disease. Unasked Baba said, "Bring that big bellied man here." I said to myself. "How is it possible when he takes you to be a Mussalman?" At once Baba asks me, "Am I not a Brahmin?" This clearly shows Baba considered himself to be a Brahmin.

Another time in 1916 when one Shantaram Nachne Dehnukar went to Shirdi and he forgot to

pay to Baba a two-anna piece that his friend V. S. Samant had given for Baba along with a coconut etc., and he asked Baba's permission to return home, giving him coconut etc., Baba had reminded him of the said two anna piece by saying, "You may go, but why have you been retaining the two anna piece of this *Poor Brahmin?*" Whereupon Dehnukar at once paid the two-anna piece requesting Baba to pardon him for the lapse of his memory.

When on the behest of his master Shri H. V. Sathe one Megha came to Baba, taking Baba to be a Mahomaden, Baba became angry on seeing him and did not allow him to mount up the steps of the Dwarkamayee threatening him with a stone, that if he came up to see Him, He would assuredly kill him with the stone, and bawled out, "I am the lowest of the low, a Yawan (Mahomaden) and you are a Brahmin of the highest caste." This clearly shows Baba's dislike for those who considered him to be a Mahomaden

Baba putting His hand on His chest said to Mrs Kashibai Kanitkar of Poona, "This is a Brahmin. This Brahmin will lead lacks of people to the Shubhra Marga (The White Path as opposed to the Black Path of demons) and take them to the goal right upto the end This is a Brahmin's

Masjid." (Baba's Charters and Sayings Page 57. Nrisinh Swami.)

All this clearly shows that if Baba was really born, He was born in a Brahmin family. Born or unborn Baba thought He was Brahmin and got offended with all those who thought He was a Mahomaden.

We may therefore say with the late Shri Nrisinh Swami "The birth and parentage of Sai Baba are wrapped in mystery. We have not come across a single person who has any direct knowledge of them."

It is however common knowledge that the people of all castes, creeds, races and religions—Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, Christians and others—come to Baba and soon become attached to Him They all gradually recognise Him to be their long-lost philosopher, friend and guide They see in Him their God, their Prophet, their Son of God, their Saviour or their best and dearest friend. They realise that Sai Baba is always present He controls their hearts and knows all their actions good, bad or indifferent They are also convinced that He knows their most secret thoughts and their wicked actions and yet He is full of mercy and never gives up those who remember Him He cares not to look at the family.

caste, creed or religion or even the action of His devotees; but as soon as the devotees remember Him, he runs up at once with or without assuming a form and defends them against fell diseases, calamities, worldly difficulties, ill-repute etc. etc. For instance, He assumed the form of a farmer for His devotee Balakram Mankar and handed over to him a rail ticket for his destination, Poona. For another devotee Nanasaheb Chandorkar, He became (assumed the form of) a tonga, horses and a coach-man, when Shri Sai Himself dispatched His Udi with one Ramgir He had taken that Ramgir to Nana's house and saved by that Udi Nana Saheb's daughter from a mortal delivery. Even after He left His body, He has been helping devotees in the same way Thus he put Dhumal's hand-signature on about a thousand Municipal papers one night when Dhumal was unable to find time for the purpose For another devotee Nachne, of Prabhu caste, He assumed the form of a peon called Himself Ganpatishankar, attended on him till he reached Nasik and thereafter also he helped him in the performance of the obsequial ceremonies of his wife for three days and as soon as the ceremonies were over, He left him saying His services were wanted by His Master. Persons visiting Shirdi have known that if only they would remember Him, He would without fail stretch His

helping hand and render such help as they would require. These devotees look upon Sai Baba as their own God, Prophet, Saviour and as such they try their utmost to draw or attract Him to them by propitiaing Him and by rendering such services as they can. The sole yearning of these devotees is to obtain His grace, for they know that therein only lies their material and spiritual welfare, they little care to know His parentage, family, race, or His Guru They have ever believed that the kind and merciful God though ever formless has for their benefit assumed a form and so if they are wise they should without delay try their level best to obtain His grace, the root cause of all earthly and heavenly happiness, leaving all other matters about His family etc to logicians, the worldly wise and wiseacres They definitely believe and assert—God is only one, there are no separate Gods for the various races, castes and creeds and yet He has powers to assume such forms as His devotees yearn for and ardently desire to behold with their material eyes. And the living testimony of this is Shree Sai Baba

Chapter Two

SHRI SAI'S GURU, SHRI SAI'S MANIFESTATION IN SHIRDI

(1) I manifest myself in every age, for the protection of the good, destruction of the wicked and the foundation of religion.

(Bh. Gita, Ch 4-8)

(2) Little in statue, great in valour. Subdued terrible Cobra Kali, held aloft a week the Govardhan Mount and saved people from the fury of God Indra

(Bhakan)

(3) Some are born Great.

"I was only eight years old when I left my parents and came to the Ganges (Baba always named the Godavari as the Ganges) Then I came to Shirdi." This was what Baba said (unasked) to the writer

He continued. "I found my master in the Chawdi here His calm, peaceful, cheerful and meditative face attracted me, charmed me, almost bewitched me so much so, that my eyes, were ever rivetted on his face and that even a moment's separation from him made me uneasy. In his company I used to forget all my hunger and thirst I served him with all my heart for years together for more than 12 years The duties I had

imposed on myself for him were very arduous He never left his seat for any purpose, not even to answer calls of nature. Merged in meditation for ever, he entirely forgot that he had a body, mind etc He ate. passed urine and stool etc., there and there—on his seat. I fed him, changed his clothes, swept and kept his seat always clean. As a reward of this he awarded me his blessings saying, "Wherever you are, here or even beyond the seven seas, I will be ever with you to guard and protect you." Right at the start he had asked me to pay his fees; and on my asking what his fees were he coolly said "his fees were only two pice," and these pice were not the government currency I had been using but his two pice fees consisted of two things, *Nishta* faith—absolute faith and *Saboori*—Patience. I readily gave him these two pice and though I was very eager to obtain from his holy mouth some holy spell or formula which I could go on chanting and repeating, he uttered nothing into ears He simply said, "I shall ever be with you, protecting you by my mere loving glance in the manner of a tortoise protecting his young ones by mere glance. The entire credit of all this glory of mine goes to this Guru master It is the outcome of his blessings"

On another occasion He said to this writer "My Guru's (Master's) name is Roshan Sha Mian."

When Baba uttered these words, I took them as advising me to take to the Sun worship, as I am by caste a Brahmin and Brahmins are by their scriptures required to worship the Sun, three times a day — at sunrise, at noon and the Sunset and repeat the Sun's Gayatri formula for at least 324 times a day. Subsequently Baba made me repeat this Gayatri several thousand times for expiation of certain sins committed by me in the past and also asked me to offer a few rice oblations in the fire and set apart certain portions for gods, guests cows, dogs etc. by performing "the Vaishwdeva" ceremony before taking dinner. All this confirmed me in my belief that Baba's intention in telling me the name of His Guru was to impress on me the necessity of performing the six duties enjoined on Brahmins by scriptures. Subsequently I marked that Shri Baba was from time to time also using the word 'Roshan'. He used it particularly when he told some parables. Then he had used that word in the sense of 'light' meaning knowledge as opposed to (the darkness of) ignorance. In Shrimad Bhagwat Gita, the Celestial Song of Lord Shri Krishna, Gnan is described as "Jyotisham api tadjyoti," The light of all the luminous And Upnishadic prayer also reads. "Tamaso ma jyotigamay," "—Lead me to light from darkness" uses this word Jyoti or Roshan in the sense of know-

ledge. Applying the same sense to 'Roshan' in 'Roshan Sha', the name Roshan Shah would mean the Lord of Knowledge, the Universal Soul self-luminous, self-evident, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient as the only Truth, the only Reality the only (root of) knowledge properly understood the world being Its evanscent reflection Saints aspire to attain oneness with this Absolute truth or Lord God in order to be of some help to the suffering humanity and in their efforts to do so they even sacrifice their body. Sai Baba thus cast off His body to save Tatya Patil to whom He was indebted for the services rendered by him, his mother and father. Jesus Christ and Lord Krishna sacrificed themselves to save the erring humanity from sins Thus Shri Sai Baba by His sacrifice taught humanity that the beauty of life consists in subduing or sacrificing the Lowerself for the Higher-self Latterly these words reminded me of what the Lord Shri Krishna said to His pet disciple Arjun on the battlefield of Kuru Kshetra (Panipat), embodied by Shri Vyas in Bhagvad Gita or the Celestial song of Shri Lord Krishna The first line of the Fourth Chapter of that book says that the Lord taught this method of realisation to Vaivaswat, meaning the Sun. As the giver of light to the world Baba must have called him Roshan Shah Lord Krishna recites in this line the

geneology of the disciple and states the order in which He taught this way of realisation. The first to receive this instruction from Him was the Sun, He said, and as the Sun or the Roshan Shahmia was Sai Baba's instructor (as in the case of the well-known Shri Yagnya Valkya) Sai Baba received all knowledge from Lord Krishna through His first disciple the Sun.

. We do not however mean to suggest by the above interpretations that a person of the name Roshan Shahmia did not materially exist, on the contrary we, by these interpretations desire to draw the attention to the peculiar characteristic of the life events of such a superman as Shri Sai Baba This peculiarity is that all the events of Supermen's life can always be interpreted metaphorically as well as literally. As examples of this we may draw the attention of the readers to the various biographies of Shri Ram and Shri Krishna, some of which have always shown the philosophical (metaphorical) significance (aspect) of almost all the incidents of the lives of these Supermen

Accordingly, one should not be astonished if we say that Roshan Shah spoken of by Baba did exist in flesh and blood and Baba strenuously served him for over twelve years It seems Roshan Shah thereafter cast off his mortal coil—his body—

and Baba entombed him under or near the nimb tree at present found in Shirdi Navalkar's Vada. When the previous owner of this Wada B S Sathe wanted to put up a storey and terrace, at the time of putting a stair case he unearthed a tomb with an under-ground cellar or a cave under the tree, Baba was asked as to what should be done about the tomb and the cave? Baba said that, "that place belonged to His elders and it should neither be disturbed nor opened but it should be covered up with a stone as before." Persons and some boys playing a hide and seek game removed the stone and found under it several steps leading further down They said that the cave was dark but rather long, Baba once told the writer pointing to a pillar near His Dhuni (the sacred fire) in the Dwarkamai, "that there was a cave there. He always confined Himself to that cave: that once his beard had grown so long that it reached the ground and swept, that He never came out of the cave unless to meet some holy and religious man" It seems this cellar or cave referred to by Baba started from under the nimb tree and extended upto and even beyond the Chowdi This cave was in fact Baba's place of penance After years of such penance in the cave, people caught sight of Him one day when He had come out for water It seems He had finished His term of penance then,

for thereafter He did not return to the cave. but made the nimb tree His abode. And what an abode it was! Situate on the outskirts of the village in the debris of the old village wall. where people used to heap their rubbish, where a stream of village filthy stinking water ran and the thorny cactus abounded unchecked, Baba stayed uncared for and unnoticed by the people of the village for about a year or two With only a Kafni on the body and a rag covering the head He lived on. Digging a pit He slept in it. How he fed himself no one knows but from the admonition He had once administered to Sagunrao M. Naik—it appears He had lived only on Margosa leaves for more than 12 years. He had said to Sagun. "What! You can't put up with a day or two days' starvation? I myself had lived on Margosa leaves for as many as twelve years "

Mhalsapati was probably the first to introduce himself to Shri Baba; he was so much impressed with conversation he had with Baba that he thereafter saw Him daily and introduced Baba to his other friends Kashinath tailor and Appa Jogle, saying that a Fakir Sai Baba has made a sudden appearance on the outskirts of the village near the debris of village wall, that He is far far above the common average man, a pure and holy man worth paying respects, from that time on-

ward He came to be known as Sai Baba. This Trio—of Mhalasapati, Kashinath and Jogle—daily visited him and paid their respects to Him and supplied whatever little requirements He had. The news that one Sai Baba had manifested Himself near the nimb tree on the outskirts of the village, reached the ears of the late Appa Patil Kote and one day he with his wife went to Baba to pay respects. It is said that when Baba saw them coming He left His seat, got up and cordially welcomed Appa and told his wife that she had been veritably His sister. The lady Bayjabai, on seeing Baba was so much impressed that she there and then resolved never to take her food without first feeding Baba.

At the start Sai Baba prescribed and gave medicine but never charged nor accepted any money for the same. Not only that, but if he found that there was none to look after or nurse His patient, He would Himself be his nurse and serve him. Once it so happened that His patient failed to observe the rules of diet etc He had prescribed and as a result thereof he died. Since that day Baba gave up administering medicine and gave only His Udi—holy ashes for their relief. In this connection Baba once said, "I used to give medicine before but thereafter giving up everything I went on chanting (taking) the name of

Hari, and by a ceaseless muttering of that holy name I actually became Hari."

After giving up the physicianship, Baba was seldom found at his abode under the nimb tree. He moved about in the village fields in the jungle amidst thorns etc apparently idling away His time but virtually utilising each minute of His time in remembering and meditating on God He was in rags and village people looked upon Him as and called Him a mad Fakir. He begged His food once, twice or at times even a dozen times in a day. Without caring for the adverse opinion of the village folks Bayjabai however never failed to give alms whenever Baba went to her for the purpose and never failed to observe her self-imposed rule of feeding Baba before she fed herself And for the observance of this rule she had at times with a basket on her head to wander in fields and jungle for hours to find Him out and if she found Baba was merged in meditation, she would slowly wake Him up, serve the dish, persuade Him to take a morsel or two (if not more) return home and then take her meals Baba in turn amply rewarded her services by doing everything in His power for her welfare and the welfare of her whole family In particular, Baba treated her son Tatya Patil with tender care and affection, regularly paid him to look after His

requirements, and even after the educated, the cultured, the rich and the wealthy, multi-millionaire came to Him, He would not give over his charge to any one else, nor would He ever leave for Chawdi unless and until this Tatva came and accompanied Him; but as if all this was not enough return for the services rendered by Bayjabai, He cast off even His body to save this Tatya.

As Shirdi was on the way to many places of pilgrimage of southern India such as Rameshwar, Pandharpur etc , several saints visited Shirdi and amongst them there were two, who ultimately thought it fit to settle down in Shirdi. One of them was Devdas who came to Shirdi when he was only 10-11 years old. He was well built and had lustrous eyes. He had put up in Maruti Temple. He was a man of knowledge Shirdi people looked upon him with respect. Appa, Mhalasapati, Kashinath and others were his daily visitors and they supplied all His wants. Kashinath and Tatya Patil had accepted him as their Guru (Religious Master). He usually taught Vyenkatesh Stotra (a composition of hymns on God Vyenkatesh). Ten-Eleven years after he came Baba appeared in Shirdi Baba saw him from time to time. Another Saint Jankidas, highly advanced, had also come and settled down before Baba's appearance When Baba came He spent long long hours in the company of this Jankidas.

Baba did not accept any money gift from any body these days; so when Kashinath offered Him some money-gift He flatly refused to receive it. This refusal brought tears in the eyes of Kashinath. Moved by this He started taking money gifts (Dakshina) from him, at first He used to take only two pice as Dakshina but gradually He increased that sum. However, from the day Baba started accepting His Dakshina, Kashinath's financial position grew weak and weak till he became abjectly poor and people refused to give him even a loan This set Kashinath thinking. He asked himself, "How could charity made to the most holy and the pure reduce him to such a miserable state?" Then after a little introspection he found that it was not his Charity that reduced him to this miserable state but it was his pride that blinded him to the fact that the giver was not he but God Himself; Unless God gives who can dole out Charity? In fact as he knew Baba to be God, he now understood that the truth lying under this unhappy event of his life was that both the giver of Charity and receiver of Charity were one viz; God Himself From the day he realised this true state of affairs, his condition started improving, and very soon he regained his lost wealth and reputation.

This Kashinath dealt in cloth and wherever

weekly bazaars were held, he would go and put up a temporary shop. Once when he was returning from some such Bazaar of Narur he was accosted by a band of armed dacoits. Kashinath handed over to them all the cash that he had, but he would not part with a small bag. Dacoits thought the little bag contained some more precious article and so they demanded the delivery of the said bag. He refused and so the dacoits tried to snatch it away from him but he opposed and so a tussle ensued Taking the sword of one of the dacoits which lay there he killed two of them and so the third one coming from behind dealt on Kashinath's head an axe-blow. This blow stunned Kashinath and he lay prostrate on earth as if dead. Taking Kashinath to be dead the other dacoits escaped leaving Kashinath there After some time Kashinath regained his consciousness and people pressed him that he be allowed to be taken to a hospital But his faith in Baba was so unshakeable that he refused and returned to Shirdi in that condition and recovered under Baba's care The Government was pleased to award him a sword for the valour he had shown in facing these dacoits and while the fray between the dacoits and Kashinath was going on, Baba at Shirdi had been shouting, abusing, bawling aloud. People accustomed to Baba's ways at once understood that some dear

devotee of Baba had been in some trouble and to tide over the calamity of that devotee He was roaring, shouting, abusing etc. Kashinath lived long after this and passed away on the 11th day of the lunar month which is considered to be very auspicious for death. Appa Jogle also passed away on the same day—some time after this, enjoying a long lease of a happy life.

The third of the trio Mhalasapati worked as a goldsmith, but was not so financially happy as the other two; he was abjectly poor and it seems Baba did not want that he should have affluence or plenty of riches. Once a rich person presented to Baba a dish filled with Gold and Silver coins. Baba returned it to the donor in tact. Mhalasapati was present there at the time for his daily worship of Baba The donor seeing Mhalasapati. desired that he be permitted by Baba to give over that dish of coins to Mhalasapati Baba emphatically disallowed it, saying, "Real royalty is renunciation. That alone lasts for ever. Riches (or Plenty) are evanscent."

Though unlucky in money-matters Shri Mhalasapati was very lucky in having Baba's constant company on every alternate night at the Dwarkamai Both of them then kept as it were night vigil but mainly it was Baba who would be awake all night, not allowing Mhalasapati and

Tatya (when the latter also attended the Dwarkamayi to go to sleep by night He would very often ask Mhalasapati to keep his hand on His (Baba's) heart and see that His utterance of the holy name did not stop, that as soon as it stopped he was asked to wake Him up; but Baba very often complained that instead of watching the sound of the holy name emerging from His Heart, he himself would fall asleep, his hand would become heavy and He was required to wake him up feeling the heaviness of his hand This clearly shows what the object of Baba in not allowing Mhalasapati (and Tatya) to sleep in the Dwarkamayi was, that He wanted them to chant the holy name by keeping awake.

We have already mentioned that it was Mhalasapati who dubbed Shri with the name of Sai Baba and Sai Baba also willingly retained it till He left His body. But Mhalasapati had to his credit a still greater service to posterity of which we shall now speak.

Baba had been suffering from Asthma and He had a very severe attack of it in about the December of 1885. He said to Mhalasapati, "I am going up into a superconscious state for a period of 3 days. Take care of this body exactly for three days, and if by the end of that period I do not return to bodily consciousness, then pointing

to a place—a corner of the present chowk—have a Samadhi prepared, bury me there and put up two flags as a token of my being there. But till then do not disturb me; and do not leave me unguarded, unwatched. Saying this, He drew up His breath upto the tabernacle and fell senseless, on the lap of Mhalasapati It was 10 P.M. He had no breath, no pulsation, the whole body was functionless; people gathered together but finding Baba in a super-conscious state, none said anything at the time, two days after, some Molvi (Mahomedan Fakir), Appa Kulkarni, and Kashinath seeing that life had left Baba's body entirely, proposed to have a Samadhi built for Him for His burial Thanks to Mhalasapati he did not change his posture, nor budge an inch lest Baba should get disturbed for three days, without a break and simply heard out the proposals coming from various quarters about the disposal of His body asking them to wait till the time-limit fixed by Baba was over Pending the discussion about the disposal of Shri's body, the time limit of three painful days had at last expired On expiry of that period at 3 A.M. life gradually returned to Baba, His eyes also opened bye and bye, breathing started and the belly also moved His face then appeared to be joyful, winking of the eyes started, stiffness of the limbs had gone and the

whole body started working as if nothing had happened But for Mhalasapati's firm devotion, faith in Baba's words and his marvellous courage in adhering to the same in the face of people's opposition, the posterity, nay millions of people, would have been deprived of the innumerable benefits that they derived and are deriving from Him

Chapter Three

SAI BABA'S MISSION

"But for Guru, who can show the right path? Millions of Suns, Moons and stars may simultaneously put forth their best light. And yet the Darkness, the impenetrable Darkness will be there to block your path, if you have no Guru."

"Know Guru to be God, serve him with all your heart, then the fetters of worldly bonds will fall off and the fruit of absolution will be yours."

"Surrender unto the Guru, meditate on God's reality; obtain release—the all pervading joy" says Bramananda

Few seem to have even the faintest idea of the immense powers of a perfect man, of a man who has by constant meditation wholly identified himself with Brahman. Scholars and Pandits, Teachers and Professors of Indian Philosophy,

particularly of Brahma Sutra know this full well, but immersed in their own worldly affairs they seldom care to look up for a person fully answering the description of such a man.

The last chapter of this Brahma Sutra clearly states that a realised soul has the powers to assume any form he likes, that he may not, if he so wills take any form, that he can by his mere will not only assume one form but as many as he wants, that he will create and uncreate his own world, that by his mere will he will have all he wants, that he can move in the whole of the universe—material and spiritual—by that power, and wherever he goes he will be adored and respected by people

Sai Baba fully answers to the description of the perfect soul given by Brahma Sutra and this is and was the reason why He could manifest Himself in as many forms as he deemed necessary either to satisfy the loving hearts of His devotees or to show to the real aspirant that He is the same, in no way different from the God, whom the aspirant worshipped. We shall quote a few experiences of the devotees in illustration of this.

A Sai devotee Mamlatdar was very friendly with a doctor who was a staunch devotee of Shri Ramchandraji. In 1909 Christmas the Mamlatdar informed his doctor friend that he had

determined to spend his X'mas at Shirdi and that he would be very happy to have his company if he could give it. The Doctor was a Brahmin, strictly adhering to the mandates of scriptures and regularly discharged all the duties enjoined upon Brahmins therein; over and above this, he was a staunch devotee of Shri Ram and would never bow to a Mahomedan The doctor therefore said, he may give his company if he so desired but he would not bow to Baba The Mamlatdar having assured him that none in Shirdi, nor Baba Himself would ask him to prostrate himself before Baba, the Doctor accompanied the Mamlatdar to Shirdi. On reaching Shirdi both the friends went to Dwarkamayee; the Mamlatdar as usual prostrated himself before Baba and offered Him fruits etc. The doctor stood witnessing all this. When lo! in place of Sai Baba the doctor saw his own deity Shri Ramchandraji. At once he prostrated himself before Baba, on coming out of Dwarkamayee, when Mamlatdar asked the doctor, why he had prostrated himself before Baba though none had asked him to do so, he at once declared that he prostrated because in place of Sai he saw his own deity Shri Ramchandraji I was lucky enough to have my deitie's *Darshan* and that was the reason why I lay at the feet of Shri Sai Baba.

Another man Mule Shastri, a palmist also got a similar experience. The Shastri was a disciple

of one Gholap Swami—a Sanyasi, and he never bowed to any one else but his master Gholap Swami. During the Shastri's stay in Shirdi one day Baba called him at the arti (The waving of lights) ceremony, fearing pollution he stood at a distance and threw some flowers on Baba from there; but to his great surprise he saw in Baba's place is own Guru Gholap Swami in his usual Bhagwa (red-ochre) coloured dress; so he at once rushed to Baba and while Sai devotees were reciting at the time Shri Sai's Arti he recited his Gholap Swami's Arti, when he finished arti recitation he opened his eyes and saw Sai Baba seated in his usual place, demanding some Dakshina from him. Mule Shastri prostrated himself before Sai Baba as if to thank Him for the favour He had shown in procuring for him his Guru's Darshana after a lapse of many many years.

Shri Sai Baba convinced one Harishchandra Pitale of Bombay that He was the Swami of Akkalkot, by giving him three rupees at the time of his departure from Shirdi and asking him to deposit and worship them with the two rupees He had previously given him. Pitale visiting Baba for the first time could not understand when the said two rupees were given to him; but subsequently on inquiring of his mother he learnt that Swami of Akkalkot had given his father Rs. 2/-

spoken of by Baba. In this way Baba clearly told him, He was none else but the Swami of Akkalkot.

For another staunch devotee of Shanker named Megha He assumed the form of Shanker, when that devotee went to a Shanker's temple of his native country and convinced him that He was veritably his own deity Shanker in the form of Sai Baba

The priest of the goddess Sapt Shrangi temple, also was shown that his goddess and Baba were one. He was directed in a dream by his goddess to go to "Baba" in reply to his fervent prayer for relief from worries he sufferred on account of worldly calamities. Misunderstanding the word "Baba" used by the goddess the priest went to Trambakeshwar and staying there for ten days tried to propitiate Shanker by constant prayer etc., but he found no improvement in his harrowed (troubled) mind. Returning home, he rebuked the goddess that she had sent him to Trambakeshwar without any purpose and again prayed her for relief. The goddess again appeared in the priest's dream and said, "by 'Baba' I meant 'Baba of Shirdi.' Why did you run upto Trambakeshwar in vain?" The priest was altogether ignorant of the whereabouts of Shirdi; nor had he heard of Sai Baba. While he was in this embarrassed predica-

ment, Baba asked one of his favourite devotee Madhavrao to go to that Sapt Shrangi temple and fulfil the vow of giving two gold teats long since outstanding in respect of his mother's illness. The priest was very much pleased to see Madhavrao of Shirdi, for from him he got all the information about Shirdi and Sai Baba; so when Madhavrao had finished his work of fulfilling the vow and prepared to return to Shirdi the priest of the Sapt Shrangi temple accompanied him. So as soon as the priest prostrated himself before Baba his worries left him; his ruffled mind calmed down; and he enjoyed peace Neither the priest spoke nor Baba; mere sight of Baba sufficed to supply what he wanted; this convinced the priest that Shri Sai Baba was in charge of Sapt Shrangi's work then

Even after he left His body, in response to the earnest prayer of one Mrs Kumudben B. Raval (of Bhau's Pole, Ahmedabad Maha Gujarat) Baba manifested Himself in the form of Goddess Ambika.

Similarly all such prayers of devotees of Mahomedans and Parsis were responded to by Baba by manifestations of such forms as the devotees worshipped. Very lately for a Parsi doctor of Kopergaon (Dist Ahmednagar Maharashtra) He assumed the form of his Paygamber-Zarthostra. To another Mahomedan devotee

named Gulam Hussein Jaffarally Surendranagar (Maha Gujarat) He was pleased to appear as his Prophet Alli on horse To native Christians He showed that He had that heavenly divine power which they believed in Thus Chakranarayan, a Police constable, who kept an eye on the income and outgoings of Baba expressed his wonder saying, "Baba distributed hundreds of rupees per day and yet very often He received a much lesser amount Really he has got the divine power." A native Christian nurse yearning to go to Shirdi after His Maha-Samadhi, was at first refused leave by the head-nurse but on the first one's constant chanting of Baba's name, she was able to bring about a change in the mind of the latter, as a result of which she sanctioned her leave and enabled the first one to fulfil her wish Another Christian Miss Mirabai Satyavir, a teacher in Baroda Methodist school, says that this (the writer's) book inspired in her an unshakeable faith, and in the course of her reading she had Sai Baba's vision in the form of a globe of Light and thereafter she has visited Shirdi more than once; Baba is her only refuge or shelter He has been helping her and always saving her from irreparable losses It is therefore clear that rendering of help in all matters material, spiritual to every person irrespective of his caste, creed, race, merits or demerits

has been Sai Baba's daily routine, His very nature, His joy.

He knew that amongst the people of the various races, who visited Him, something like hereditary antipathy subsisted particularly between two major races, Hindus and Muslims and this very often burst out in riots, murders, arson, loot and it seems that if He had elected to adopt some of both their ways of life and religion, His object was to draw to Him people of both these races to provide for them a common ground for meeting and worship so that all mis-understandings would vanish and their attention would be drawn and fixed on the one universal feature of devotion, common to both religions, that differences between them in the forms and formalities of the religions of both would not be made much of, would be tolerated with a liberal mind on both sides, that strifes and feuds would give place to unity and friendly feelings and relations.

With this object in view, when therefore the leaders of Shirdi village Gopalrao Gunde and others approached Baba with a request to fix a day for holding annual fare at Shirdi, He said, "fix up Ramnavmi, the birth day (date) of Shri Ramchandra," for He knew that it being a Hindu holy day they would surely run upto Shirdi to attend the fare and as to Mahomedans, they would also

come, as this was the only day fixed for annual fare; the object of their common worship being Baba in order to please Him at any rate, they would sink all their differences of non-essentials, methods of worship and meet as friends or brothers—sons of a common father—and for ever forget their prestine enemosity, hatred, antipathy. In due course this hope was fulfilled, though at first fanaticism of one party took an ugly form and might have burst out in undesirable feuds and fights or riots but for Baba's holy and powerful presence The narration of a few of such incidents would not be out of place here

The difference in the forms of worship of one and the same God between Hindus and Muslims coupled with ignorance of His real nature and want of toleration is the root cause of all their dissensions, disputes, strifes etc , Liberal minded educated Muslims understand this and they therefore do not join their orthodox section which cannot look upon Hindu ways of worship with the equanimity and toleration of really educated cultured men In Shirdi as well, the orthodox Muslims believed that Hindus by their anointing Baba with sandal paste, ceremonial worship and the noisy waving of lights before Him were compelling "the Mahomedan" Baba to commit what they thought to be a 'Sin' according to the tenets of

Muslim religion If therefore these Hindus were stopped from coming to Baba all this irreligion would be checked for ever. They therefore many a times spoke to Baba, tried to persuade Him to prevent Hindus from carrying out such noisy programmes before Him but Baba seemed to turn a deaf ear to all that they said. In the year 1894 therefore the ignorant Shirdi Muslims brought to Shirdi a Kazi (a religious teacher) from Sangamner (of Ahmednagar) and arming themselves with canes and Lathis under the leadership of that Kazi, stood at the Masjid entrance to prevent all Hindus from approaching Baba and worshipping Him with their materials of worship, such as sandal paste, flower, lamps etc As per his daily routine, Mhalasapati came there to offer his worship to Baba but seeing the mob armed with lethal weapons at the gate of the Masjid he stood at a distance, mentally offered Him his Pooja and was just retracing his steps home when Baba Himself called him and asked him to carry out to the finish his daily worship The Muslims stood aghast; and could do nothing, they then slowly dispersed and since then never thought of obstructing Hindus from worshipping Baba in their own way.

Twenty years after, a Pathan fanatic of the same orthodox, ignorant section came to Shirdi. He hated the Hindus for the same reason as above

mentioned and so one mid-night when some Hindus were sleeping by his side in Chawdi, he said to Baba, "If you are being spoilt, it is because of these sleeping Hindus. I will make short work of them (kill them) if only you will permit me to do so," Baba replied, "the fault, if any, is not theirs but mine; instead of killing them, therefore kill me so that all the things you hate would end" But the Pathan could not muster courage to do that and so the sleeping Hindus were also saved.

Another Pathan, whom, on account of his bustling shouting prayers and wild manners people called Rohilla, worshipped Baba as his prophet and adored Him as such But one day in the fit of his fanaticism. he forgot all this and thinking that he should stop Baba once for all from going astray in the way that He did by allowing Hindus to anoint Him, worship Him in the noisy way, he rushed upon Baba with a big stick to murder Him. Baba simply cast a glance at him and caught his wrist. This slight gesture of resistance of Baba rendered him powerless and he fell to the ground and was able to get up only with the help of two persons. The wonderful strength that Baba showed in resisting him fully convinced the Rohilla that Baba was the real prophet and thereafter let off examining the propriety or impropriety of Baba's actions.

A much respected Mahomedan Fakir was in Baba's constant company but was ignorant of the principles of true religion One day he thought of converting Baba's Hindu Devotees to Mahomedanism; so when Baba went out to Lendi as per His daily routine, he polluted the water kept ready for Hindu's drink by dropping in each tumbler the residue of the water he had drunk. In his ignorance he thought that the conversion of the Hindus would be complete so soon as they drink the residue of the water drunk by him, he never thought that for real conversion of religion the heart has got to be converted. However that may be, by His omniscience Baba knew the trick the Fakir had played to carry out his programme of conversion of Hindus in a mass; so on his return from Lendi He became mighty angry and his anger reached the highest peak, He broke the earthen drinking pot, threw away all the tumblers filled with polluted water and went on abusing for a long long time say an hour or two At last the Fakir's conspiracy of the conversion of Hindus in a mass leaked out and the Fakir got ashamed of the childish ignorance he had shown

But the above unpleasant incidents of Muslim fanaticism were not thereafter repeated at all, for the annual fair of Ramnavmi gave the Muslims and Hindus an opportunity to meet and to under-

stand one another and as a result thereof each gave up the disgust and hatred he had for the other and looked upon each other's ways of worship with eyes of equanimity and toleration When therefore the Hindus started celebrating the Ramnavmi Festival by Katha, Kirtan, Arti with Band, Drums, Cymbals etc., and Mahomedans took out their sandal procession the same day and went to the Dwarkamayee, each party joined the other in their worship of Baba Thus Hindus joined the sandal procession and Muslims also took part in the celebration of Ramnavmi-festival Particularly when in the evening two big flags were taken in procession to the Dwarkamayee by two Hindus and put up on the Dwarkamayee the Muslims joined the procession and jointly hailed the putting up of these flags on the Dwarkamayee The flags that were and are being so put up annually seem to be a standing testimony of the Hindu-Muslim unity at least in Shirdi, and, if we may say so, amongst Baba's devotees of the whole of India.

Chapter Four

SUPERNATURAL POWERS

Powers Supernatural
Are God's Gifts
Saints use them
For God's purposes
And Sinners
Use them for their own.

Seekers of God rightly suppose that, if they use such supernatural powers as they have, their spiritual progress would, for ever, be retarded Shri Sai Baba stands far far above the category of seekers He has already reached the goal. Not only He has realised God; He has by His constant meditation attained oneness with God. The idea that He is an entity apart from God has entirely left Him He lives, moves and acts in God and when any of the supernatural powers is being exercised or used by Him, He never thinks that He has been doing anything extraordinary, the exercise of these powers being so natural to Him. We shall recount here a few of such incidents for the enlightenment of our readers

Baba had all the eight great powers a Yogi possesses He can become small, big, light, heavy assume any form, go and move without barriers,

control, fire, air, earth, water, rains, storms etc. Once he hung up to the worn out Masjid's ceiling pillars a plank 2 Ft. long and 1/2 Ft. broad with rags. He appeared to be sitting on that plank with His head bent down or sleeping on it, with lamps burning both near the head and the feet. No one saw Him climbing up or going down this plank and all wondered how He managed to pass His nights comfortably over that small plank supported only by thread-bare rags Seeing that people crowded there to see Him aloft on the plank, He removed the plank and again started sleeping on the floor.

Shirdi people first came to know of this 'mad' fakir's super-natural powers, when Shopkeepers unitedly refused to dole out oil for His lamps and He kept the lamps at the Dwarkamayi burning for the whole night with water in place of oil. The shop-keepers and Shirdi people stood amazed and this news spread like wild fire in the whole of the Ahmednagar District.

Next time when hay stacks in a Shirdi field caught fire and the crops of Shirdi people, massed in that place, were in danger of being burnt down, at the earnest entreaties of the Shirdi farmers, Baba went there and drew round the burning hay-stack a circle of water, stating, the fire would not then spread beyond that line, the farmers found that

Baba's control of fire was unique, for the fire stopped so soon as the hay stack marked by Baba was burnt down.

Thereafter people also marked that whenever Baba prepared some medicinal decoction, He dipped His hand in the burning liquid and never used a spoon for the purpose.

Another instance of His control over elements occurred when one day He was taking His meals at the Dwarkamayi and some persons were sitting by, He bawled out "Stop" and when after finishing His meals He had all His belongings removed outside the Dwarkamayi the ceiling cracked and at once came down with a crash, spreading mortar bricks etc all over the Dwarkamayi

More than once Baba at the request of people or for the safe retreat home of His devotees stopped the fierce winded ceaseless out-pouring of rains.

Thrice were devotees' little girls saved from being drowned in the waterfull foundations of some Shirdi buildings.

When Baba gave permission for holding annual Ramnavmi Fair, water problem was the stiffest for solution and so when the management committee requested Baba to help them in the matter, He asked them to take away, after He had

finished His meals the leaf-dish used by Him for His meals and throw the same in the dried up well. So soon as that was done, water streamed into the well and since that day this well has been serving the needs of the people of Shirdi.

Hindu metaphysics states that a human body has in it everything that the universe has; this seems to be true in the case of a soul who has been in unison with Brahman or God When Das Ganu asked Baba for permission to go on a pilgrimage to Singaba for a bath in the holy Godavari. Baba did not permit him saying, "the Godavari is here" But Das Ganu could not feel so. Hence Baba asked him to draw near and to hold out his joint palms near His feet. So soon as he did this, water trickled down Baba's feet and within a few minutes, his palms were filled overflowing with water. He was over-joyed, he sprinkled this water on his head and on the heads of those others who were there, and composed a song narrating this incident This incident clearly indicates what the body of a realised soul is or contains

At times Baba gave to his devotees dreams the veracity of which the devotee could not doubt. Thus being pleased with the devotion of a childless woman, Baba appeared in her dream, blessed her and handed her a coconut saying, "Take this,

sons obeying and overstaying the periods fixed by courts or of leaves and departing from Shirdi on the days fixed by Him have never suffered.

Simply through Baba's grace numerous devotees have obtained male issues though their wives had long since passed child bearing age and doctors had declared its impossibility. The names of a few out of the many such devotees are:—Nana Saheb Dengle, Gopalrao Gund, Damodar Savlaram Rasne, Rao Saheb H V. Sathe, Sakharam Aurangabadker, Narayan Govind Shinde of Harda, Rao Bahadur Moreshwerrao Pradhan, Saptnekar Vakil and others

But the greatest of all great supernatural powers Baba had was the one of restoring to life a dead person He exercised this power in the case of the late Mrs. Malanbai the late D R. Joshi Devgaonkar's daughter and a close relative of V S Ratanjanker. She suffered from T B. but all medicines having failed, she insisted on her being taken to Shirdi When brought to Shirdi Baba asked her to lie down on a blanket and take nothing but water. She carefully followed these instructions but after a week or so she died one early morning. Baba was then in the Chowdi. and for the first time in Shirdi history Baba did not leave Chowdi though it was past 8 A M The daughter's parents, with heavy hearts were pre-

paring for the funeral when Malanbai appeared to breathe, opened her eyes and looked round about, as if much frightened. Then she said, "A black person had been carrying me away, very much frightened, I cried out to Baba for help, Baba took His staff and gave him good cudgelling, snatched me away from his hand and carried me to Chowdi." Without seeing Chowdi she gave a correct description of the Chowdi. Just at this time Baba left His Chowdi bed bawling out, striking his staff against the ground and came shouting to Dixit's Vada where the girl had put up. Seeing Malanbai restored to life there was joy all round

Chapter Five

KNOWLEDGE OF PREVIOUS BIRTHS

"I and you have passed through many rounds of births, I remember them all, but you do not know them." Bhagawad geeta IV-5

The difference between an ordinary man and a Superman usually consists in the latter's having a knowledge of the past births of all creatures. Once while Baba was returning from Lendi, His eyes fell on a flock of goats From out of them, He purchased two she-goats for Rs. 32/- in all,

inspite of the protests of the near-bye devotees, who informed Baba. that the price he paid for the she-goat was extravagant as ordinarily a she goat can be had for Rs 2/- only, and at the most Rs. 4/- may be paid for each. Hearing this Baba said, "Go to that shop-keeper, purchase two seers (about 1 87 Kg) of Chana pulse and feed each with one seer and return the she-goats to the vendor" The transaction angered those worldly minded devotees, when Baba told them the following history of the past births of these goats "These goats were human beings and used to be with me always. They were two brothers At the start they had great affection for each other and were joint; but thereafter the greed of money made them hostile; the younger worked hard and earned a lot but the elder could not earn being idle, becoming jealous of the younger, he hatched a plot to murder the other; the plot however leaked out and this resulted in a scuffle in which each killed the other. A few days after their death they were born as she-goats Recognising them, I thought of purchasing them and providing them with a life of ease, but as their ill-luck would have it, you protested and so I had to return these goats to their owner."

Another time Baba revealed His knowledge of the past births stating, "After breakfast I stirred out and when walking fatigued me I came

upon a river bank. The river was small but was full, I had a bath in it, and the scenery round about cheered me up. I was thinking of having my chillam puff when I heard the painful croaking of a frog. Taking such sound to be the usual feature of watery places, I made my chillam ready when a traveller came to me and bowed to me. I shared my chillam puff with him and he invited me to his house with a request that I should have my noon-meal with him, and then return after resting. In the meanwhile the frogs croaking grew louder and louder; so the traveller said, "I will just go and see what this is". The traveller said on return, "a big black serpent has caught a frog and will soon swallow it". Baba said, "Do you think I have come all this distance for nothing? I shall see that the frog is saved." We then went to the spot where the serpent was, when Baba nearing the serpent said, "Oh Virbhadrappa, this Chanbasappa your enemy has been born a frog and you a serpent to wreak your vengeance on him; Shame! Shame upon you, now at least give up hostility and rest in peace." So soon as these words were uttered by Baba the serpent gave up the frog and each went its own way. Seeing this the traveller requested me to tell him who these Virbhadrappa and Chanbasappa were.

Baba thereupon said, "Four or five miles away from my residence was a Shankar's temple;

it required repairs; so a fund was started and the subscribers appointed one of them a Banker as their Manager to get this work done. The Banker was honest but was miserly; he did not misappropriate the fund but he did not spend a single farthing of his own; so though the repair work was started it remained incomplete; a second time the fund was therefore collected; but the Banker would not get the repairs resumed His wife in the meanwhile had two dreams in which Shankar asked her to contribute her mite for the repairs, saying, "As she sincerely loved him (Shankar) even one pice contribution of hers would be taken by him worth a lac of Rupees" Determining therefore to sell off her ornaments, she requested her husband to sell away her ornaments and carry out the temple repairs from the sale proceeds thereof The Banker instead of selling his wife's ornaments purchased these ornaments himself for a sum of Rs 1,000/- and in lieu of that consideration he conveyed to his wife a piece of land mortgaged to him by a helpless widow (for only Rs 200) and advised his wife to donate that land to the temple priest as a gift The wife accordingly made a gift of that land to the temple priest The Banker, his wife as also the helpless widow mortgagor all died in due course

"Thereafter the banker's wife was born as a daughter to the temple priest of Shankar's temple

and was benamed Gauri and the helpless widow mortgagor was born as a son also to the same Shankar's temple priest and was named Chanbasappa The banker was born as the son of a poor Brahmin and was named Virbhadrappa To make a living, Virbhadrappa left his home and moved about from one village to another eking out his living by begging, working as a cooly etc During these peregienations he came to this Shankar's temple and put up there. As God would have it, the priest and the inmates of his house liked him and with My consent Gouri was married to him. The priest was so fond of Gouri that he put Gouri in the sole possession of that (mortgaged) land with rights to enjoy the income thereof in perpetuity Through God's grace that fallow land had purchaser and he bought it for a lac of rupees paying half the amount of Rs. 50,000/- on the spot and agreeing to pay the balance by instalments of Rs 2,000/- each All liked the idea except Gouri's brother Chanbasappa, who demanded half the sum agreed upon as the legal heir of the priest, on the ground that his father the priest was the real owner of that land Virbhadrappa opposed this demand of Chanbasappa On their referring this dispute to Me I said that the sole owner of that land is Shanker. All this money therefore should be spent for Shankar Gouri alone is the sole and rightful

owner, Virbhadrappa and he abused Me. The same night Shankar appeared before Gouri in a dream and said, "All this money is yours. Give nothing to any one, and as to the appropriation of this amount I have full trust in Chanbasappa and so pay him such sum as he demands for the temple management and the balance should be appropriated as per Baba's (My) instructions" When therefore she came to Me for advice, I told her to have the whole amount for herself and to pay half of the interest on that sum to Chanbasappa The account of the dream, his wife had told. had no effect on Virbhadrappa He abused every body and then went mad In a fit of insanity he very often threatened Chanbasappa that whenever he found Chanbasappa alone he would cut him to pieces This threatening haunted Chanbasappa day and night and allowed him no peace of mind, though I very often told him, " he has nothing to fear about" Both died thereafter Virbhadrappa was born a serpent to wreak his vengeance and Chanbasappa was born a frog, for though he was my devotee, he had no faith in Me and stood in constant dread of Virbhadrappa, inspite of My assurance to him"

Over and above the knowledge that Baba had of the past births of human beings, He had also full knowledge of the births and activities of beasts, animals, insects etc, and took care to

see that they did not unjustly suffer at the hands of the wicked.

Once while a devotee was seated near Baba, a lizard went chirping so loudly that, that devotee asked Baba, "what made the lizard chirp so loud and whether it foreboded some evil" Baba told him not to entertain any fear of it, and that her chirping was simply an expression of her joy, for she knows her sister was coming from Aurangabad to meet her. The devotee thought Baba had simply humoured him by that reply and so he attached no importance to what Baba had said. Soon however he was disillusioned. A gentleman on horseback came to Shirdi from Aurangabad to meet Baba but Baba was taking His bath and he had therefore to wait outside for about half an hour. As he had to proceed farther from Shirdi, he thought of utilising his time by feeding his hungry horse with grams He therefore took his small gunny bag, whipped it twice or thrice and then turned its inside out to clean it properly, when a small lizard fell down from the bag. Frightened as she was by her being thrown down like that, she heard her sister's chirping so she was put at ease, she therefore strutted in eclat and pomp to meet her sister. The sisters had met after a long long time, so both were overwhelmed with joy, they kissed and caressed each other and had a very happy time The question-

ing devotee who was watching all this was amazed at the supernatural oneness of Baba with such little creatures as the lizard even

Another day at breakfast time Baba said to Mrs. Jog, "Mother prepare to-day plenty of pulse puddings, apply plenty of clarified butter to them, and after the noon arti (waving of lights) feed with them the buffalo whom you will find at your back door." She accordingly prepared the puddings, applied clarified butter to them in plenty, took a part of it for Baba and opening the back door after Arti actually saw a buffalo waiting there. She was overjoyed at this and fed the buffalo with those puddings The buffalo heartily enjoyed this meal and doing justice to them, rested there with ease Strangely enough however the buffalo soon died. This frightened the lady devotee, who looked up all the vessels used in the preparation of the pudding to assure herself that no poisonous substance had, without her knowledge, found its way into the cooking utensils She stood aghast at the idea that she had been instrumental in bringing about the buffalo's death and that not only she had committed a sin this way but she had made herself liable to a prosecution by the buffalo owner Terrified at this idea she rushed to Baba and narrated to Him how unhappy she was at what had happened. Baba emphatically told her, "Mother, you have

done no wrong: the only desire that the buffalo had in that body was, this eating of the sweet pudding, in satisfying this desire of hers you have earned religious merit, since she has now obtained a release from the animal body. She has now gone into a superior body, so do not worry and as to your fear of prosecution, rest assured, no one is going to come to claim this buffalo at all. This was enough to set at rest the troubled mind of that lady devotee Mrs. Jog

Next time Baba saved a bull from a butcher's hands. Once it so happened in Shirdi that a bull dedicated to God Shivji roamed about in the village gardens and fields and destroyed the plants, standing crops etc. So people met together and decided to send away the bull to Panjra Pole (an asylum for old beasts) at Yeola and collected some fund for the purpose They entrusted this work to Bhikhoo Marwadi of Shirdi, in all good faith: but the said Bhikhoo proved treacherous, he did go to Yeola as directed, but instead of taking the bull to that asylum he sold it to a butcher for a sum of Rs. 14/-. Returning to Shirdi however he calmly reported that he had taken the bull to Panjra Pole and kept him there Baba knew how the bull was dealt with, so He appeared in one Bayoji's dream and said, "You have been enjoying sound sleep of rest Haven't you placed me in a butcher's hand?" Bayoji re

ported this to the village people, who, growing suspicious of the bonafides of the Marwadi, deputed Bayoji to Yeola for investigation Bayoji went to Yeola Panjra Pole took full and complete search of it. Not finding the bull there, he went to the butcher's lane and looked about here and there Fortuitously at this very time the bull had raised up its head above a butcher's compound wall; Bayoji saw this, he at once recognised the bull, so he approached the butcher and requested him to return the bull, but he would not part with it, as he had purchased it for Rs 14/- cash Bayoji thereupon got the bull released by paying to the butcher Rs 14/- and then took him to the old beasts' asylum and kept him there. On his return to Shirdi he acquainted the people with what Bhikhoo had done, and so to set a lesson to such sinful, faithless people as Bhikhoo, Baba inspired them to prosecute him, and Bhikhoo had to rot in Jail for two months for his heinous act

These instances show that Baba had His benign protective eyes not only on the people of Shirdi but also on all creatures, large and small—bull, buffalo, lizard etc of Shirdi.

Chapter Six

"Saints are the best of benefactors."

"Unlike man they live not for themselves, but for others, God's creatures whom He loves"

Baba had His own ways of relieving people from such fell epidemics as Plague and Cholera. When the writer first went to Shirdi in December 1911 Baba had on His body seven plague bubos. Devotees asked Baba as to what remedies they should adopt to relieve Him from these bubos' pains Baba said, "Nothing needs be done Seven bubos on My body bespeak deaths of only seven people, that no more plague" fatalities would occur in Shirdi thenceforth, the devotees however pressed Baba to name the medicine, the application of which would relieve Him from bubo pain, so He prescribed for Himself the application of burnt cotton soaked in oil and the devotees went on applying this during my stay of ten days in Shirdi. So soon however as seven fatal plague cases had occurred, the plague, it was reported, left Shirdi, and bubos also disappeared from over Baba's body

Another time, when Cholera broke out in Shirdi and several people fell victims to it, one morning Baba took out large quantity of wheat from the gunny bag He had at the Dwarkamayi

and turning the hand-mill Himself, ground them and had that wheat flour spread out on the banks of the stream, two, three furlongs away from Shirdi. When some devotees asked Baba what all that was for, He emphatically stated it was to stop Cholera and as stated by Him, Shirdi people were freed from the ravages of Cholera since that day Several educated devotees of Baba attempted to find out from scientists without success the connection, the spread of Wheat Flour had with Cholera epidemic

Similarly, when a millionaire devotee suffered from constant motions and vomitting for a fortnight Baba called him to His presence and by a simple wave of His 4th finger, cured him of stools and vomitting So soon as Baba by His finger ordered Bapu Saheb not to go to privy nor to vomit, the motions and vomittings stopped and Bapu Saheb felt allright On being asked by his doctor what diet should Bapu Saheb be given, Baba said give him almond Rabadi which is usually considered to be too heavy to digest for a man of Bapu Saheb's weakened health. Bapu Saheb did not stop to weigh this common belief but with faith implicit in Baba took the prescribed Rabadi The result was marvellous; Bapu Saheb at once regained his lost energy and health

Another cure by Baba was even more wonderful than the preceding one. One Patil

Bhimaji of Narayan village, Taluka Junner, Dist. Nasik had tuberculosis of a most advanced stage. Every five minutes he vomitted blood. All medicines had failed and his life was despaired of. He was very intimate with Nana Saheb, who advised him to go to Shirdi, and crave Baba's grace for his cure. So he came to Shirdi and supported by two three men, he got down from the cart and was seated in front of Baba. Bhimaji laid his head on Baba's feet and prayed, "Save this helpless soul." Baba was moved by these words and Patil's pain subsided at once, and yet on finding that the Patil thereafter felt a bit uneasy, Baba told him, "I say, give up all worry now. Your stepping into Shirdi has ended all your pains and miseries. Go you will have a complete cure within a day or two. Put up at Bhimabai's place now vacant." Blood vomitting, he had every five minutes, stopped in Baba's presence and he felt as if he was slowly regaining his lost energy, so he slowly walked upto the place where Baba had asked him to put up. The ground there appeared to be quite wet as it had very recent rubble filling and cow dung plastering. To-night he had two fearful dreams, in the first of which his primary school teacher went on caning him and making him repeat some poetry lines and in the other, a fierce looking man went on rolling a heavy stone roller on his chest with such force that he felt as

if he was passing through the last moments of his life But thereafter he got sound sleep and when he awoke in the morning he found himself completely cured, much refreshed, he had now no coughing, no vomitting He was agreeably surprised to see that the fell disease had, for ever left him. He therefore all alone went to Baba, prostrated himself before Him and expressed his gratefulness to Him with tears in his eyes Baba blessed him All without exception admitted that Baba had cured the Patil of T. B. in advanced stage within a day and that too without medicine simply by the exercise of His divine supernatural powers Patil then left for home

Another time when Madhavrao was stung by a poisonous serpent in the evening, He stopped the spread of poison of the serpent's fang simply by his command to the serpent and keeping Madhavrao awake the whole night chewing nimb-leaves. Next morning Madhavrao was all right; the finger stung by the serpent had only a burning sensation for a few days. Of what moment is a scorpion sting to one who can stop the poison spread of a poisonous snake simply by the word of His mouth? Bapu Saheb Jog had that experience, when he had one evening a scorpion sting and he complained to Baba about it and Baba simply said, "Go, go, the pain will soon vanish."

A mere prostration before Baba and the procuring of His blessings cured Chhotubhai Paralkar of 8 years old Dispepsia, and Mrs. R. A. Tarkhad of six years' old bad head-ache An agent's prayer in the event of the patients' disability to attend in person was also found to serve the purpose. This was seen in the case of Madhavrao's brother's wife, who had a plague fever with two bubos and so soon as Madhavrao informed Baba of this, praying for her recovery she recovered within twelve hours. A mere decision to come to Shirdi and starting for it cured one Mrs. Rangari of her inability to eat, drink etc. on account of her throat swelling. Bombay Law College Principal Shri Dhurandhar was cured of seven years' old Asthama by one puff of Baba's Chillam offered to him by Baba Himself.

Though Baba has cast off His mortal coil, even now His devotees are having such experiences One Doctor Kathe's two years old son Vijay was unable to take even milk and emitted particles of stone through bladder On their coming to Shirdi Vijay's mother asked Vijay to take some of Shri's food and to their wonder Vijay took that food with his own hand and was able to digest it, and emission of bladder stones also stopped for ever.

An educated wife of an educated husband



Shri Sai Baba on his way to Lendi from Masjid.

had been ailing from a disease which doctors, physicians and Hakims were unable to diagnose and cure. The lady would swoon, close her teeth tight and remain unconscious for hours together. At last the doctor's father asked him to take his wife to Shirdi; "Just take a trial," he said. To satisfy the father both of them went to Shirdi but the wife would not go to Baba Samadhi temple; so with the help of a friend she was dragged to the Samadhi and made to prostrate herself before Samadhi. Baba's sacred ash and Samadhi water were thrust into her mouth On the second day's evening after bowing before Samadhi she fell on the ground and the spirit within started speaking, "I had pounced upon the lady and possessed her while she was returning from her parental house and standing under a tree. I am a female Bhil ghost; the holy water and the holy ash sprinkled over me have vanquished me So I am leaving this body for ever and going away" This ended the lady's sickness; and she returned home safe and sound.

Nine years after Baba's Maha Samadhi i e in the year 1927 a devotee's wife was miraculously saved by Baba from the jaws of death. The husband and wife were returning home after celebrating Ramnavmi at Shirdi The wife got down at Thana Rly Station to fetch water and just when

with a waterfull vessel she was boarding the train. the train started, and the woman fell down under the train. The husband and other passengers combined, shouted to the guard to stop the train, but the train having already started stopped only after it had gone some distance. the husband and the passengers had feared the woman must have been crushed under the wheels but when they ran up to the spot of the accident, to their utter amazement they saw the woman standing there unscathed, uninjured. In reply to the inquiry of all, the woman said. as soon as I fell, I remembered Baba. He at once appeared, stood in front of me pressed me hard against the platform till the train passed away and saved me Baba disappeared so soon as the train had left the platform. what sort of body Baba had assumed to save this woman, one can hardly know, for usually there is no room enough to stand for two persons between the train wheels and the platform, and yet what is impossible to a Superman like Baba?

So also Baba saved His devotee Nagesh Atmaram Sawant, a Police Sub-Inspector, from death in the year 1929 during the Bombay Hindu Muslim riots While on duty Sawant had fever and bad head-ache, an European officer in his round seeing that Sawant was really ill, relieved him saying he would inform the Superintendent of this Unluckily an hour after Sawant was relieved, the riot

reached its highest pitch and the officer was killed in it. Had not Baba inspired the European Officer to relieve Sawant from duty probably death would have taken his toll and not the officer's.

One Sakarlal Keshavram Bhatt, a shop keeper of Bombay, who had been lame by one leg, tried all means to cure his lameness without success; hearing of Baba's wonderful powers, he came to Shirdi in 1911, prostrated himself before Baba and obtained His blessings. As a result thereof on his return journey as he walked a few steps in the sand to go up the ferry (ship) the clogged up leg nerve loosened itself and to his surprise he was able to walk erect. His lameness had gone for ever. He was so pleased with this that he broadcast this news of Baba's superhuman powers amongst all his customers and persons connected with him.

Another cure of lameness was of a school mistress widow's only son in the year 1956. The boy appeared for the S. S. C. Examination but when he returned from the Examination on the last day he was found to have a bad attack of fever. Proper medicines cured him of the fever, but he was not cured of the lameness of legs brought on by the fever; the boy had always to be lifted up for being taken to any place. All possible remedies were tried but when they proved ineffective, hearing of

Shirdi Sai Baba's powers, the school mistress took the son to Shirdi On account of his lameness the boy felt so shy that rather than going to Baba's Samadhi on the shoulders of a coolie, he preferred staying at the Shirdi Vada The mother alone therefore had to go to Shri's Samadhi to pray for her son's cure for two days. She was to leave Shirdi on the third day, so she went to Samadhi Mandir to attend Arti and offered her last obeisance before leaving In the meanwhile Baba appeared before the boy and said, "Have courage" He then lent him his hand, led him to the temple and kept him standing against the temple pillar On return from the Arti when the mother did not find the son in the room, she again approached the Samadhi and with tears in her eyes most piteously prayed for the recovery of the boy When she was just returning from the temple her eyes fell on the boy standing against the pillar She inquired of the boy how he had managed to come there, the boy narrated how Baba had helped him to come, but the mother would not believe it However when she saw that with her support the boy was able to walk up to their room she was mightily pleased The boy fully recovered within a month thereafter and was able to move and walk freely.

Now a few cases of the wonderful cure of blindness by Baba's supernatural power may be

cited. The grandfather of Shri Baba's devotee Vithalrao Yashwant Deshpande pressed his son devotee to send him to Baba for His blessings, so Vithalrao arranged to send him to Shirdi with his son Led by the grand-son the grandfather went to the Dwarkamayi, prostrated himself before Baba and sorrowfully said to Baba, "I am unable to see." Baba said, "You will be able to see" So soon as Baba uttered these words, the grandfather had his eye-sight restored to him He was able to see everything Blindness left him entirely. Never was anybody's prayer for relief granted so soon All wondered at it

Another blind devotee went to Baba and prayed to Baba, "I have lost my eyesight I do not feel its loss, for want of eyesight keeps me away from many undesirable things, all the same I am eager to see the human form in which you, my lord, have manifested yourself Please therefore grant me eyesight till I satiate my eyes by beholding your human form, and you may withdraw this grant of eyesight so soon as that is done" Baba at once granted this request, he saw Baba with his own eyes and then he lost vision and became blind

A stark blind man was found singing in the tune of his cymbals before Baba, the one sacred formula "Ramkrishna Hari" (names of incarnations Ram and Krishna, Vishnu), in the year 1913-15.

The writer found the same man in Shirdi in 1942-43 reciting Chapters of Shri Bhagvad Gita of Lord Krishna and poems, verses from the well-known Maharashtra Saint Gnaneshwer's Amratanubhava. I asked him "When did you get your eyes?" He said, "Through Baba's grace he had blurred vision during Baba's time and thereafter a clear vision Through His grace he is now able to read, write and move about freely." To assure the writer of this he read out to the writer several verses from the said Amratanubhava that he had with him

Even after Baba left His body, He has been wielding His Powers for the benefit of His devotees Thus He gifted speech to the speechless daughter of His devotee R S Maniar of Kumbakonam, Madras. The said daughter Rajkumari was dumb down from her birth; all possible means were tried to cure her of her dumbness, but when all of them proved fruitless Mr. Maniar took to Baba's worship. Some days after, Baba asked him to bring her speechless daughter to Shirdi for paying her respects to His Samadhi Maniar brought the daughter to Shirdi and made the daughter place flowers etc on Baba's Samadhi and pay her respects to Him As soon as she did this she started speaking "Sai Baba" "Sai Baba" and then she started speaking freely Parents were naturally very much pleased to see the instantaneous cure of their daughter.

A Bombay (Andheri) devotee had a similar experience. His little daughter, run over by a motor car, was saved, but was injured and took a fortnight to recover in the hospital. Though the hospital treatment restored her health, the speech she had lost was not re-gained, she became dumb and though several remedies, medicines etc were tried all of them proved ineffective At the last, the holy ash of Baba's sacred hands was tried and she started speaking as soon as she took its firt dose All were startled at the powers the holy ash of Baba's hands.



Chapter Seven

MATERIAL GAINS

Necessities have no law.

"Aged parents, Chaste wife, infant son must be maintained at any cost" Manu.

I take upon myself the burden of getting and protecting the wealth of those who worship me, meditate on me and see nothing but Myself in this world B Gita IX-22

It seems Baba did not like that any of His able-bodied devotees should remain idle and be a burden on society or his kith and kin He always

preached, "A man should always be doing something" He Himself never sat idle but was always busy doing something. In the noon when no work was at hand He would just take a needle and repair His torn out Dhoti or His robe etc. and if at such a time somebody would turn up and question Baba, "Why should you take this trouble when we all are ready and willing to do this for you?" He would at once reply, "One has to be always busy doing something and so far as possible he should avoid troubling others for his own piece of work"

How a man seeking to escape the discharge of his worldly duties by running away for good from it on the excuse of going on a pilgrimage, was persuaded by Baba to return home and to shoulder his responsibilities like a man, is best seen in the life of one Janardan Moreshwer Fanse alias Haribhau Fanse. Wearied with carrying on the burden of his worldly cares, informing his mother Haribhau left his home for Rameshwar; however as Shirdi was on the way to Rameshwar, with a view to have the blessings of the far famed Shri Baba he came to Shirdi and felt so much attracted by Baba, that he stayed at Shirdi for a week. When thereafter he asked Baba's permission to go to Rameshwar, He ordered him to go home, saying his mother had abstained from food since the day he had left home and if he failed to return home she might die The mother was very much pleased to see

her son back at home and was convinced that Baba was omniscient. In the meanwhile a person of his village being attacked with Cholera approached him, he administered to him Shri Baba's holy ashes and he was cured This led the people to believe that he was a physician The holy ashes were however soon exhausted and so Haribhau was embarrassed as to how he should deal with another Cholera case, if he got one But luckily for him Cholera left his village since that day Thereafter he happened to go to a nearby village and casually met some Marwadi merchant known to him The merchant seeing that a simple devotee had come to meet him, told Haribhau, "Look here, my brother is seriously ill, all physicians, doctors have tried their utmost to cure him but they have all failed, now since you are Shri Sai Babas devotee, if your Sai Baba is really a saint, He must cure my brother through you Haribhau saw the patient found the case to be serious, was therefore anxious to slip away but as it was night, he could not leave for home At night when Haribhau's Bhajan (prayer) time became due, the patient himself made the necessary preparations for Bhajan and throughout the Bhajan sat concentrating on Baba's Photo. This surprised all and the Marwadi now said, "Whether the patient dies or survives I will have his medicine from none but you" To shirk the responsibility Haribhau purposely quoted his

fees in excess of those of the Civil Surgeon, at Rs. 200/- The Marwadi agreed to that. That night Baba appeared in Haribhau's dream and told him what the disease was and the medicine to be prescribed for it. Haribhau prescribed the said medicine and the patient started taking this medicine; the patient fully recovered after a time and so the Marwadi offered Rs. 200/- the stipulated fees to Haribhau, but Haribhau would not accept it stating he had done nothing, it was his Guru's work. Marwadi could not rest satisfied till he requited Haribhau's labour in some form or other so he bought a scarf worth Rs 200/- and going to Haribhau's house when he was out, left it there. Haribhau could not now refuse the acceptance but he felt that the price-amount of the scarf should be sent to Baba However as he was penniless and Baba had also left off His body in the meanwhile, while offering his usual night prayers, tears rolled down his eyes That very night Baba appeared to him in his dream and said, "There is famine all round at present, so sell off the scarf and purchase rice from this amount of Rs 200/-, sell it at underprice for the present, carry on this rice business till this amount of Rs 200/- runs out Then sell rice at profit and you will be able to make a living" Following these instructions Haribhau prospered, became happy and then never thought of deserting home

Baba did not and does not even today want that His devotees should starve; of course He discouraged greed but He wanted that His devotees should have a proper living and so He helped most of them up to a job or provided them with facilities for business To mention a few of the thousands of such instances of every day occurrence.

In the year 1915 one Shri R. A. Tarkhad had to be without service for a pretty long time after he gave up the Mill Manager's post he had held; so he came and stayed at Shirdi with his wife. When he had stayed for very many days he asked Baba's permission to return home Baba permitted them to return but asked them to go to their Bombay home via Poona and not via Manmad; as this route was a little longer they had to spend a little more As Mr Tarkhad was without a job for many many days his wife felt it inconvenient but Mr Tarkhad knew the significance of Baba's instructions, so overruling the objection of Mrs they took the Poona route and put up at their friend's for night Learning from Mr. Tarkhad that he was in search of a proper job for himself his friend informed him that a mill owner there was in bad need of a Manager able to control labour, immediately Mr Tarkhad saw the Mill owner and the Mill owner was so much impressed with the conversation he had with Mr Tarkhad that there and

then he appointed Mr Tarkhad as his Mill Manager Mr and Mrs Tarkhad were naturally very much pleased with this, and this had brought home to her the importance of Baba's instruction to them about taking the Poona route.

Another time one Ganpatrao Narke, who after graduation had spent three years at Manchester for specialisation in Geology and Mining went to Shirdi to see his father-in-law Shrimant Booty Being of a spiritually inquisitive turn of mind he saw and paid his respects to Baba and soon became so much attached to Him, that in all important matters he would not do anything without Baba's permission For some years he could get only job work for a few months and that too in different provinces Being tired of this camp life when he heard of a vacancy of a Professor's post at Benares College carrying a salary of Rs. 300/- per mensem, he sought Baba's permission to accept it, but Baba asked him to desist from such an attempt and continue the job work he had been doing Till then there was no chair for Geology and Mining at Poona College, but in 1917 an advertisement appeared calling for applications for such a post in the Poona Engineering College With Baba's consent Mr Narke applied for it and was appointed a Professor of Geology and Mining on a salary of Rs. 600/- P M Why Baba had pre-

vented Narke from taking up Benares University professorship for Rs. 300/- P. M. only was now understood and appreciated by Narke and consequently his faith in Baba grew stronger

But it was not always that Baba took care to guard the interests of persons with high academic qualifications, he took equal interest and care of even non-qualified persons provided he had the necessary devotion and faith in Him One Cholkar vowed that if he would be able to pass his P.Sc Examination and get a teacher's post he would go and pay his respects to Sai Baba, He prepared for his examination, took it and passed out and obtained a teacher's post as well through Shri Baba's grace, but as his salary was meagre, he was not able to spare money enough for going to Shirdi He therefore took another vow that he would not take sugar until he was able to go to Shirdi At last he was able to spare the necessary money so he left for Shirdi and one morning he saw Baba and paid his respects to Him Just at that time Bapu Saheb Jog turned up Baba said to Mr Jog, 'Take this man to your place and give him a sugarful cup of tea, Bapu Saheb accordingly took Cholkar with him and learnt from him that Baba had added "Sugarful" to a cup of tea, to show to Cholkar that He was fully aware of his vow of abstaining from sugar till he had seen Baba This pleased

Cholkar and he felt that he had met one who was ready to be his guide, philosopher and friend if he stuck to Him, with faith.

In another case, a young man named Bapurao Boravke who went to Shirdi on foot with only three annas in his pocket earned lakhs of Rupees through Shri's grace Boravke had lost his parents when he was almost an infant, and taking advantage of his age, his relatives squandered away his ancestral property with the result that Bapurao was forced to look up for a job so soon as he had gone upto the entrance (S. S C) class. The only relative he had, was his maternal uncle, a devotee of Sai Baba at Shirdi, so he went upto Kopergaon by railway but the funds that he had, had run out and with only three annas balance in his pocket he could not get a seat on the Tonga, so he went to Shirdi on foot and paid his respects to Baba He was well received by his maternal uncle, so he stayed with him looking after his sugar candy field Under his care his maternal uncle's sugar crop improved so much that the neighbouring field owner took Boravke into partnership. Boravke now looked after both the fields Next few years they got bumper sugar candy crops, the prices also went up considerably, and so within two years Bapurao made a lac of Rupees, he realised that, all that was due to Shri Baba's grace and so pur-

chasing a piece of land at Shirdi he now grew Oranges, Mosambi in it, built a bunglow for himself and settled down there to be able to pay his respects to Baba everyday. Even today we are reminded of Shri's powerful grace when we see this bunglow with his fruit garden on the way to Rahata a few furlongs from Shirdi.

One Christian Police Inspector Joseph of 46, Turner Road, Bandra, having failed to get any clue about culprits in a criminal case prayed to Baba to help him, Baba was pleased to appear in his dream and to give him the necessary instructions for investigation Following Shri's instructions Joseph was able to find out the proper culprit.

Again Baba helped the late Mr. Tendulkar Raghunathrao in obtaining a fairly good pension. Both Mrs. Savitribai Tendulkar and Mr R Tendulkar were ardent devotees of Baba, both of them jointly and severally composed songs on Baba's glory. Raghunathrao had grown grey in Bombay Graham & Co.'s service and had then attacks of epilepsy fits and dimmed vision He put in an application for pension and in the usual course of events his pension would have been fixed at Rs. 75/- the one half of his salary. So Savitribai felt a bit embarrassed as to how she could cope with the expenses of her large family in Rs 75/-. To set her at rest the all knowing Baba appeared

in Savitribai's dream and said, "I have a mind to fix up your pension at Rs. 100/-. Will that satisfy you?" Savitribai said, "We have full faith, that you will do the needful for us." A fortnight after the dream, the Company considered Tendulkar's application and going beyond the usual rule, fixed his pension at Rs. 110/-. This was enough to satisfy the husband and wife who thereafter spent the rest of their lives in singing songs of God's glory.

Not only did Baba provide money to his devotees but He also saw to it that they did not by their thoughtless ventures run into losses An old devotee of Baba Shri Damuanna Kasar at the instance of his Bombay friend, thought of going in for a purchase of cotton bales; he therefore sought Baba's advice on the point, through another Shirdi devotee. Baba replied, "Sheth seems to have lost his sense He should rest contented with what little he has got, he should not run after lakhs" Seeing that the cotton prices were going up everyday, Sheth said to himself, the devotee who has obtained Baba's advice for me in this matter does not seem to have properly put before Baba all the facts, so he ran down to Shirdi, paid his respects to Baba and started massaging His legs While doing so, it occurred to him that if he reserved a certain portion of the profits for Baba in that transaction Baba would permit him

to enter into the proposed contract Without being asked, Baba at once said, "I would never be a party to any body's business". Hearing this Sheth looked down and entirely gave up the idea of the purchase. His Bombay friend again wrote to him that in following the advice of a Fakir, Sheth was committing a gross error of judgement; but the Bombay friend was soon disillusioned, when the cotton prices went down and down and he suffered a heavy loss in that transaction, Damuanna now realised how he was saved by following Baba's advice in preference to his friend's and thanked Him from the bottom of his heart

Thefts and robbery are well known sources of loss to people, Baba saved several of His devotees from such inroads on their purse A cook who had put in thirty-five years of service under a Baba's devotee bored a hole in his master's wall treasury and removed Rs 30,000/- currency notes, which was all, the master had saved in his life Inquiries and investigations were all made but they bore no fruit Once the master was sitting outside his house on his Otta ruminating over his loss, when a Fakir passed by him; beckoning him he narrated the loss he had sustained by theft, the Fakir thereupon advised him to swear that he would go to Shirdi of Kopergaon Taluka in Ahmednagar District and there pay his respects to the great Saint Sai Baba and that he should give

up one of the foods he liked most till he was able to fulfil his vow of going to Shirdi The master took the vow and gave up a food of his liking Even before a fortnight had elapsed, the cook thief thought better of the matter, so with all the currency notes of Rs. 30,000/- he approached his master, returned the currency notes and remorsefully requested the master to pardon him. The master was naturally overjoyed at the turn the cook's mind had taken and then fulfilled his vow by going to Shirdi and paying his thankful respects to Shri Sai Baba

One Ganpat Dhond Kadam was saved from a gang of Bhil robbers in the year 1914. Mr Kadam was proceeding to Shirdi with his family. After he had left Nasik a gang of Bhils boarded the running train and entered into the compartment where Kadam was sitting with his wife and children Kadam was reading a book of holy songs. Thinking the Bhils were interested in listening to the songs he started reading them louder The gang waited there for about five minutes and then left the running train one by one in the same way as they had entered into it The wonderful part of this story was that Mr Kadam saw a Fakir sitting in front of him, as the gang boarded the running train and then as soon as they left the train the Fakir disappeared, no one knew where When Kadam reached Shirdi and paid his respects to

Baba, He asked him, "Well, have you come safe, well guarded?" Kadam at once understood that Baba had appeared before him in the compartment on the entrance of the gang into the compartment and it was only as a result thereof that the gang of Bhils got frightened and left the train leaving him safe and unscathed.

Another Vakil Devotee Vaman Chintaman Muke of the village Basant of Taluka Nifad, staying in his field-house escaped the loss of all his property, though a party of four trespassed upon his house after mid-night and boring a hole in the northern wall, one of them had entered into it. A small trunk under the cot, where the Vakil slept, was removed by the inside thief and passed over to one of his companions outside. That small trunk had some promissory notes and Rupees Two Hundred in currency notes. When after that the said thief tried to remove a big trunk containing ornaments, silver vessels, documents worth about Rs. 10,000/- the Vakil's sister-in-law suddenly awoke and seeing the intruder called out, "Thief! Thief!". The Vakil was fast asleep, he could not hear his sister-in-law's shouts; but Baba appearing in his dream said to him, "You are robbed of your trunk, awake, awake" At once the Vakil awoke and ran frightened with a cudgel shouting "Thief! Thief!". The thief in the house made his way through the hole they had bored and all of them

scaped. The only loss the Vakil thought he had sustained, was that of a small bag but even this bag which the thieves had thrown away through fright in the neighbouring field was brought in tact to the Vakil by a farmer of that field. So ultimately it was found that the Vakil had lost nothing at all through Shri's grace.

So also when a thief broke into the rail quarters of a Railway Telegraph Master Ratanlal of Vani (Nadiad-Gujarat) and was fumbling for valuables here and there a child cried and the thief's leg dashed itself against a bucket so Ratanlal awoke and with a stick in his hand ran after the scampering thief; on return home the Rly. Master found that through Shri's grace he had lost nothing.

Sakhrevadi Sugar Mill Doctor M. R Tagare had a similar experience in 1914. He was proceeding to Kopergaon post office with a bag in a bullock cart, to encash his war Bonds of Rs. 2500/-. While he was busy talking with a fellow passenger, the bag containing the bonds slipped down the cart unnoticed by the Doctor. As soon as he noticed that the bag had dropped down on the way, leaving the cart he ran helter skelter a mile or two in search of it without success Uneasiness on account of this loss allowed him no sleep till about mid-night, when he thought of sitting

near Sai Baba's photo, he had in his house and praying to him. While he was so praying he seemed to hear someone telling him, 'Cease worrying'. This brought him peace of mind and he could then sleep. Next morning he had to attend upon an ill friend at a nearby village; so he went there, examined his friend, gave him medicine, and casually talked to him about the loss of his bag containing the said war bonds. A girl who was standing by listening sympathetically to the Doctor's talk, at once ran out and returned with a bag saying that it was found lying on the road the previous day. Looking up the bag, the Doctor found that though the papers had all been disturbed and turned up and down, the finder finding nothing valuable in his eyes, had removed nothing from the bag, that the war bonds were in tact The Doctor was overpleased and heartily thanked Baba for His favour and grace

Again a cashier of a well-known Bombay firm had made away with a large sum and come to Shirdi to save himself from arrest etc A warrant was obtained and the work of executing the warrant was entrusted to the firm manager, a Baba's devotee The manager tried his utmost to trace the culprit cashier but he could not find him He was at a loss to understand whether he should continue the search or return to Bombay, so he came to Baba to have his decision in the matter.

To his surprise, he found there the cashier seated shampooing Baba's feet. On seeing the manager, the cashier got nervous, prostrated himself before Baba and earnestly prayed to Him for saving him. Baba advised him to accompany the manager to Bombay, to confess his crime to his master, and to request him to pardon him. The cashier carried out Baba's instructions in toto and was saved from criminal prosecution and the manager also received his master's thanks for dexterously handling this affair.

Through Baba's grace His devotees were able to secure necessary loans for their personal use, for business, for getting a son educated and trained in foreign countries. So also through His grace loans were returned unasked to Shri's devotees to enable them to go to Shirdi. Bapusaheb Jog had a loan of Rs 1,400/-, advanced to his wife's relative, returned to him after a lapse of 14 years. We quote here only two such instances out of the innumerable that are extant.

A farmer was very anxious to obtain from Govt. a loan of Rs 500/- for a well on his farm and he applied twice to the Government but both his applications were refused. The farmer approached Baba in the matter, and He spoke to Nanasaheb the then Collector's Chitnis about it. Nana said he would certainly present his applica-

tion, as required by Baba, though he had no hope of the application being granted. The farmer therefore applied to the Collector again and Nanasaheb presented the application to the Collector informing him at the same time that two similar applications of his were rejected previously. The Collector thereupon asked the farmer, "Why do you press the Govt. for a loan?" The farmer himself clearly put his case before the Collector. He said, "Sir, I owe Rs. 500/- to Government. I am anxious to repay the loan I cannot do this until I have a well to water my land, and to get better crops. I have started digging the well, but the work had to be stopped owing to the intervening big rocks; unless they are fired by Dynamite and removed, the well work cannot be completed and I can't have water. Without water, I can't have crops enough to return the Government loan and so I press this application The Collector at once granted the application and the farmer obtained the loan he badly required through Baba's grace.

In another case Baba enabled a disciple of Gadge Maharaj to pay to his Master (Guru) a sum of Rs. 100/- he had promised him. The disciple Shri Ramchandra Maharaj was required by his master to defray a day's expenses of the Yagna, a sacrifice the Guru was performing, so Ramchandra went to Belapur and round-about places perform-

ing Kirtans (recitations of God's glory accompanied by music etc) and obtaining promises of the sum required. More than the sum required had been promised, so he thought he had nothing to worry about; when therefore a very few days were left for sending the promised amount to the Guru, Gadge Maharaj, he once again repaired to Belapur, for it was from that place that he had received promises for the largest portion of the required amount, but as usually happens the Belapur people evaded payment of the promised sums. This set Ramchandra thinking; he could not understand how to make up the amount required; he therefore offered up an earnest prayer to Baba to help him keep his promise to Gadge Maharaj and Baba ever ready to grant the just prayers of his devotees, inspired one man to pay the whole of the promised sum of Rs 100/- to Ramchandra during the Kirtan the next morning. Need it be said that this strengthened Shri Ramchandra's attachment to the ever kind Sai Baba ?..



Chapter Eight

EMBARRASSMENTS REMOVED

Many and Mysterious are the means,
A Superman takes,
To save his men,
From Situations,
Unwelcome, unpleasant,
His knowledge Infinite,
Powers unlimited,
Presence all Pervading;
All, all are Pillars.
To the permanent Monument
Of glory He erects,
For the eternal happiness:
And Life—Long Joy,
Of the men He loves.

Numerous experiences as illustrations of the above lines have been recorded in magazines and books on Shri Sai Baba The narration of a few of them however will, it is hoped, be deemed sufficient by the readers for this purpose.

Rao Saheb H. V. Sathe's father-in-law Kelkar had purchased for Shri Sathe a piece of land, admeasuring 20 Acres, in Shirdi. When Shri Sathe happened to come to Shirdi thereafter, he proposed to Mr. Kelkar that the latter should accompany him and show him the said land. He also asked

his wife to go with him to see that land and she consented to do so without consulting her father Kelkar however did not approve of the idea of accompanying Shri Sathe for the reason that he had in his house at the time a widow of Sathe's deceased brother and he feared that if she came to know of that purchase, she might demand a portion of the land as her share. Kelkar therefore declined to accompany Shri Sathe; so Sathe asked his wife to go with him but on the advice of her father she also now refused to do so. This irritated Shri Sathe so much that taking a whip from his coachman he was just on the point of starting whipping his wife, when Shri Baba's devotee Megha rushed in, bawling out, "Saheb, Saheb, you are wanted immediately by Shri Baba;" Shri Sathe throwing down the whip at once rushed to Baba; when Baba asked Shri Sathe, "Well, Well, what has happened?" Sathe knew at once Baba had known all that had happened and that he was preparing to whip his wife, so he shamefully hung down his head Baba then said, "Why do you want to see the land? It is there Your going there would not change it a bit." On hearing this Shri Sathe calmed down and returned home—thanking Baba for saving him from the cruelty he was to perpetrate; the wife also sincerely thanked Baba for saving her from being whipped.

Mrs. Nanasaheb Nimonkar also had a somewhat similar experience. Her son was ill at Belapur and so she wanted to go there to see how he was Her husband permitted her to do so, but he insisted that she should return the very next day. As that day was considered to be so very auspicious that none would be allowed to leave on that day, she feared that she would not be able to return on that day as per her husband's wishes (or order). She was in a fix; she would not disobey her husband, nor could she displease her son Now, Nanasaheb was always in attendance upon Baba and accompanied Him to Lendi. Just when Baba was proceeding to Lendi with Nanasaheb Mrs Nanasaheb prostrated herself before Baba and asked for permission to go to his son at Belapur Baba at once said, "Yes, Yes, go there at once, stay there for three four days and then return" Thus Mrs Nanasaheb's fear of displeasing her husband by not being able to return the next day was averted, as Nanasaheb had listened to the instructions Baba gave to his wife in that matter.

Bapusaheb Jog lost his mother, there was no such Brahmin at Shirdi as he should have to get the obsequial ceremonies of his mother duly performed, so he requested Baba to permit him to go to Nasik for the purpose, but Baba went on adjourning the day of his departure from day to day

till at last only a day was left to the day on which those ceremonies should be started. Bapusaheb informed Baba accordingly and stated that he must that day start for Nasik. Baba cooly replied to him, "We will start this noon"; Bapusaheb was in a fix; he could neither disobey Baba nor evade the performance of ceremony on the day fixed However, just at 11 A.M. that very day a learned Brahmin versed in lore of the family clan came up This satisfied Bapusaheb who was now fully convinced that the faith he had reposed in Baba was not in vain.

Nanasaheb Chandorkar got into a fix in certain family matters. His father Govindrao Chandorkar had also been like him, a District Deputy Colldector and stayed in a house built by him at Kalyan. Lately some unpleasantness had grown up between him and the local Musalmans and so he had ordered all the members of his family to desist from having any connection whatsoever with Musalmans in general. When Nanasaheb happened to return home he was informed of what had happened and his father's standing order about having no Musalman connections. Nana was now puzzled. He was prepared to give up all connections with Musalmans but he was not prepared to dissociate himself from Baba. If his father took Baba to be a Musalman, naturally he would expect Nana to give up Sai Baba; this em-

barrassed Nana; so he spoke to his father about his connection with Sai Baba. In the meanwhile Baba had already given proper turn to his father's mind in the matter; so he at once said to Nana, "My Guru (Religious Teacher) is Sakharam Maharaj, but your Guru is not Sakharam Maharaj so even if Sai Baba may really be a Mahomedan, He is your Guru, and you may most willingly continue going to Him without the least objection from me On hearing this Nanasaheb was overjoyed and heartily thanked Baba for the happy solution of the puzzle he had to face.

So also when once Nanasaheb with a party of friends, started for a pilgrimage to Ganesh Temple, about ten to twelve miles away from Pachora Rly station, in Khandesh District and feared that he would be so late that he would not be able to see the temple priest and have fooding arrangements made for all, though they were all very hungry having taken nothing after leaving home at 11 A M., he prayed to Baba that if He would be pleased to provide him and his party at least a jugfull of tea, he would be satisfied With the supernatural powers that Baba had, He appeared before the temple priest while he was meditating and informing him Nana was coming with his friends, asked him to prepare a jugfull of tea for them So when Nana and his friends reached the temple he found the temple priest

awaiting to receive them with a jugfull of tea in his hand. Nana and his friends were therefore surprised when on reaching the temple, the temple priest said, "Nana have you come safe? Here is a jugfull of tea for you and your party." They all wondered how the priest knew of their coming and their requirements and questioned priest how he had known of their coming. The priest narrated how Baba had informed him. So they all heartily thanked Baba for His timely favour.

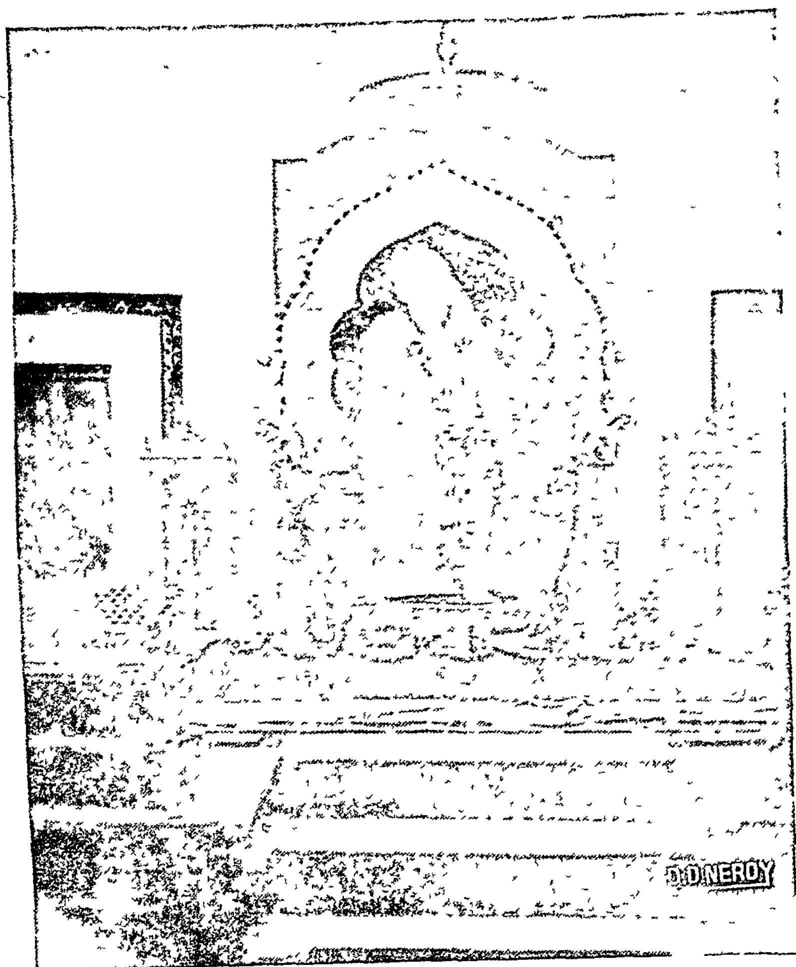
Baba has helped several of his devotees in the matter of their daughters' and sons' marriages by informing them the names and whereabouts of the would be husbands and wives through dreams and through supernatural sounds or voices. In some cases, He has accepted devotees' challenge and by fixing up the marriage within the time limit prescribed by the devotees shown them His powers of match-making. In other cases, the people who had taken a vow to see Baba on the marriage taking place had also their desires fulfilled. In several cases He has also made arrangements for the necessary ornaments and funds required by the devotees for the marriage celebrations and helped them in diverse other ways, say, by calming down the differences and dissensions that spring up on such occasions. Out of fear of prolixity we refrain from the detailed narrations of even a few of them.

A devotee clerk in customs office, once got into a fix when some customs bills once seen and checked by the customs office were recalled and could not be found in the office inspite of all-round search he made for these. The Clerk therefore feared not only his superior's reprimands but also dismissal from office and prosecution as well, a day passed away and though the bill bundle could not be found, some how or other his superiors clean forgot this matter and made no inquiry, naturally the clerk was much worried, so he prayed to Baba to save him The next morning when he went to the office, he found the required bundle of bills on his table The clerk was very much surprised for he was always the first to attend office and the last to leave it. Who could have kept it there after the office was closed, but Baba. he rightly thought He therefore thanked Baba from the bottom of his heart for saving him.

A servant drawing a monthly salary of Rs 36/- named Bhikhaji Mahedji had a sister Chhaboo She had been ill for about 4 months. On 5-12-51 her illness took a critical turn, so he was very anxious to get for her the benefit of a good doctor's advice and medicine. but within the meagre salary he was drawing, it was not at all possible for him to get these Heaving sighs upon sighs, bemoaning his lot, he carried on his

office duties chanting Sai Baba's name, when suddenly there came in a doctor for some inquiry. Though Bhikha could not recognise him, through Shri's grace the doctor himself reminded Bhikha of his previous connection with him. So Bhikha narrated to him the difficulty he was beset with in the matter of his sister's illness and requested him to examine her and prescribe the necessary medicine. The doctor readily complied with Bhikha's request; Bhikha thus got over his worries and felt assured that Baba was ever ready to shower his grace even on a poor man like himself.

Another devotee Shyamdas alias Uddhvesh of Dehnu left for Dwarka, with a party of pilgrims by steamer from Bombay. Uddhvesh had with him all the tickets of his party. It was usual to issue one ticket for both the steamer and boat journeys, Uddhvesh kept ready in his pocket the boat part of tickets and put the other part of steamer tickets in his money-purse. The steamer being overcrowded, Uddhvesh had to be standing in the gallery For reasons best known to him he thought of taking out his purse. In doing so the purse slipped out of his hand and fell in the mid-sea The purse had all the steamer tickets and all his money. As to the steamer tickets, on showing to the Ticket Checker the boat counter part of the ticket the T. C allowed him and his party to pass, but all his money were in the purse, and



Shri Sai Baba Samadhi Mandir



as a greater part of the pilgrimage yet remained to be covered, he was embarrassed. He never begged for alms. His only shelter and resort was Baba. So he wrote to Baba at Shirdi about it, but before even that letter had reached Shirdi, Baba appeared in the dream of the late Girdhar Gopal of Dehnu, as a neatly dressed priest and said, "Your father at Dwarka has no money, so send it to him." Girdhar awoke and sat up for more than an hour trying to understand the meaning of the dream he had; but he could make out nothing; feeling drowsy he then went to sleep. Again the same priest appeared in his dream but he now seemed very very angry, again he ordered Girdhar to send money to Dwarka at once without fail. Again he sat up; he awoke his wife, opened his door, looked here and there, but found none. After some time he remembered that Uddhvesh had gone to Dwarka and so he must have been in due necessity of money. He now felt convinced that this surmise of his was correct, so next morning he went to the Post Office and remitted a sum of money duly insured to Uddhvesh by Telegraphic M. O. Uddhvesh was very much surprised to receive the Telegraphic M. O. and only came to know from Girdhar, how he was ordered by a temple priest to send him money etc. When thereafter Uddhvesh went to Shirdi, Baba told him "I also had money sent to you", he felt convinced

that it was Baba alone who had relieved him from his worries and so he felt assured that he had at least One, Whom he can ever look to for protection in the midst of all sorts of difficulties.

How Baba by restraining His devotees from a hazardous step protects, is best illustrated by an incident of one R. B. Purandhare's life. He was a Railway servant. He applied for leave as he wanted to go to Shirdi with his family. The leave was sanctioned and Railway passes for free Rail Journey were also given to him. A day previous to his departure the Railway workmen were reported to be planning a strike, so his superior officer requested Purandhare to adjourn his going to Shirdi for some time; but Purandhare was adament; he said that he would never change the programme for Shirdi he had fixed, even though the officer promised him, he would see that he gets his leave and also the Railway passes after the crisis had been tided over. Purandhare returned home and made all preparations for starting. That very night Baba appeared in his dream with a staff in his hand. He was mighty angry, strongly admonished him, and finally ordered him, "Don't come to Shirdi, why should you be coming to Shirdi over and over again?" So Purandhare dropped the idea of going to Shirdi and attended office the next day as usual. This pleased his superior; the little doubt that he had about

Purandhare's complicity in the Railway men's strike at once vanished. So a month after he granted him his leave and reprocured Railway passes for him. When he went to Shirdi Baba said. "Don't go mad, we have as yet many responsibilities to discharge; so stay at home chanting my name." This clearly shows Baba's disapproval of His devotees' running down to Holy Saints shoving aside one's duties and responsibilities.

Chapter Nine

DIVINE LOVE

LOVE selfless pure DIVINE,
Consecrates the human mind,
This LOVE DIVINE is surely blind,
Sex, Race. Creed it does not mind,
Dispels the duality of MEUM and TEUM,
And leads all unto the Universal One.

We propose to give in this Chapter a few out of the many instances showing how Baba requited the LOVE DIVINE of His devotees.

It was a 1914 Ramnavmi day — a day of annual fair at Shirdi; about sixty to sixty-five thousands of people had come to pay their respects to Baba The Police party with their officers, big and small, was also present for (proper Bandobast), keeping the crowd in order. Baba had sat

up since early morning, and so when it was past 11 a. m devotees round about asked the police to stop the coming visitors for a-while to enable Baba to have His breakfast. Baba said, "I have no appetite for food to-day. The bustling crowd was rushing to the Dwarkamayi jostling one another and pushing its way towards Baba In the meanwhich an old woman aged about 60-65 years, seated away from the Dwarkamayi, was howling out without a break, requesting Baba, to have mercy on her and to favour her with His benign sight. Shri R. A. Tarkhad passing through the crowd heard her shouts and so being cut to the quick, led her to Baba through the surging crowd. As soon as she saw Baba, she fondly caressed Him; tears rolled down her eyes and she stood speechless for a few minutes. Baba blessed her by keeping His blissful hand on her head and inquired of her in minutest details the well-being of her family, then He told her, "I have been waiting for you: tell me what you have brought to me for my food?" She said, "I had brought a loaf and two onions with me, but when I came half way I felt so very exhausted and hungry that sitting by a stream, I partook half of the loaf and one onion The other half of the loaf and one onion are left unused; please do justice to them. Baba eagerly ate that loaf with onion saying, "Ah! how sweet these are" Devotees surrounding Baba and

listening to what passed before their eyes were very much struck with the reception accorded by Baba to the loving old poor woman.

Baba was in the know of all that His devotees outside had been sending Him, and if one forgot to deliver it to Him He would remind that one of it and would not rest till it was given over to Him Master Mankar was given a piece of sweets by Mrs. Tarkhad at the time of his departure for Shirdi Reaching Shirdi, he went to Baba and paid his respects to Baba but clean forgot about the Sweetmeat Baba did not say a word to him at the time. When however in the afternoon he again went to Baba, Baba asked him whether a devotee had given him something for Him. Even this much was not sufficient to wake up his memory and so he at once replied in the negative Then Baba again said, "Has not the mother given you a sweetmeat piece at the time you started for Shirdi?" The lad was at once reminded of the sweetmeat piece, and feeling sorry for his forgetfulness at once ran upto his abode; he returned with the sweetmeat piece and handed it over to Baba, who at once devoured it with the zest of a hungry man

"In or about the year 1914 June, before going into seven days' retirement, the writer had kept before leaving for Bombay an empty Compass

Box with some coins in it for Baba's use, at Radhakrishna's beneath her cup-board, without informing her of it. Soon after the writer reached Bombay he learnt that Baba had got Radhakrishna to look up her room carefully to find the said box and deliver the said sum to Him. Radhakrishna on taking search of the room did find to her amazement the said box with coins. She immediately sent the same to Baba and this appeased Him."

Two friend devotees of Bombay suburbs went to Shirdi, paid their respects to Baba and stayed at Shirdi for two three days. At the time of leaving, they purchased two copies of Baba's photo and started journey. Thereafter on the way one of them remembered his brother and felt sorry that he has omitted to purchase one more copy of Shri's photo for him On reaching home when he untied the package of photos, to his wonder he found three copies of Shri's photos instead of the two they had purchased. Ardent devotees as they both were, they ascribed this to Baba who had by His superhuman grace, requited their love by giving one more copy of his photo for his brother.

The late Shri Moreshwar Pradhan and his wife Chhotubai loved Baba from the bottom of their hearts and carefully followed every word of Baba, Baba in His turn took care to look after their welfare Once all their children had chicken pox;

all of them except the youngest got over that illness; but the youngest, who was the weakest of all, did not and one day his illness took a serious turn. Doctors gave up all hopes of the child's recovery, all the symptoms of a collapse appeared on the child's face; parents sorrowfully waited upon the child, chanting Baba's name; when suddenly Chhotubai fell asleep and in the dream she saw Baba appearing before her and saying, "What is all this? The child is allright, safe and sound. He would ask for something to eat at 6-30 A M. Give that to him without fear." At once Chhotubai woke up and was surprised to see the child showing symptoms of good health; the child was fast asleep; his fever had left him and the persons in attendance were all in a very happy mood At 6-30 A. M. the boy asked for his meals as Baba had predicted, and the mother at once gave him all he wanted. A few days after, he fully recovered.

Another time Baba got all preparations made for another child from Chhotubai by appearing in her dream at 11 P. M. and telling her, "Why are you sleeping? Get up. This child will soon have an attack of cramps" Hearing this Chhotubai got frightened. She looked at the child. It was fast asleep. It had no fever neither coughing. She was in a fix. All the same as she had full faith in Baba's words, she made all preparations for the

predicted catastrophe. Warm water was always kept ready so it was there and all the medicines usually administered at the time of such attacks were taken out from the cup-board and kept on the table ready for use All preparations were made and yet the child showed no symptoms of the feared attack. And yet as she had full faith in Baba's words, she sat up and did not go to sleep At about 2 a m. the child suddenly raised its hands and began to be unconscious So Chhotubai wakened up the members of the family, who seeing the child had its usual attack of cramps ran up hither and thither to make the usual preparations, when to their surprise they were informed that at Baba's instance she had made all the necessary preparations, they need not be running about for that Half an hour after, the child regained its consciousness; the Doctor came the next morning and gave him the proper treatment. Within four or five days the child fully recovered and thereafter through Shri's grace the child had no more attacks of cramps.

A third time Chhotubai was at Shirdi with her infant child As per her usual routine she went to Baba with flowers etc to pay her respects. As preliminary to anointing Baba's feet and forehead with scented sandal paste she was just washing Baba's feet when Baba stopped her doing so saying, "The proper rituals for your worship are at

present in the Wada, go there" On going there she found her infant child was bitterly crying, and none was able to quiet it She at once took the child on her lap, treated it in the way she knew best nad then returned to Baba Baba then allowed her to carry to the finish her rituals of worship thus teaching her, that duties towards one's children have to be first discharged before attending to one's worship routine outside home.

One Lakshmichand of Delhi who was fond of seeing and paying his respects to saints was drawn by Baba to Him by appearing before him in a dream Lakshmichand could not know who He was. It was only when he attended Das Ganu's Kirtan and looked at the photo placed by Das Ganu in front of him, that he recognised that the saint he had seen in the dream was exactly the same as the saint of that photo He then came to know that, that was the photo of Shirdi Sai Baba—whose glory Das Ganu was chanting Das Ganu's Kirtan impressed him so much that he borrowed a loan, went to Shirdi and paid his respects to Baba At once he enjoyed peace of mind. Then Baba said, "What was the necessity of coming here by borrowing a loan?" Lakshmichand wondered at Baba's supernatural knowledge. During his stay, one day Lakshmichand had incruciable pain in the back and so when as usual he went to Baba Baba of His own accord said, "You have a pain in

the back, the necessary medicine for its cure, Semolina pudding, is being prepared, as soon as it is received and you take it, this pain will go off" So soon as Baba said this a devotee brought Semolina pudding to Baba Baba gave some of it to Lakshmichand On his eating it, his pain left him. These two experiences fully convinced Lakshmichand of Baba's supernatural powers and of His love for him and enchained him to His feet for ever.

How Baba arranged for a devotee's coming to Him, removing all obstructions from his way, is best seen in the case of a boy, Ganesh Gopal Mahajan of Samantwadi, Thana. The boy was very weak and so from time to time he suffered from some illness or other. His devout mother therefore very much wished that if the boy could go to Shirdi and pay his respects to Him, his health might improve. The boy was also anxious to go to Shirdi, but he was mere clerk of Rs. 15/- P. M. at Khatau Makanjee's Mills. The Mill Manager R. A. Tarkhad was Baba's devotee As a water pump at Shirdi required repair very badly he arranged to send an Engineer to Shirdi. The Engineer determined to utilise this opportunity by taking his family with him Mrs. Tarkhad also seeing that the Engineer was proceeding to Shirdi with his family joined them. Coming to know of this, the boy Ganesh went to the Victoria Terminus with some flowers

and fruits to be sent to Baba with the party going. Mr. Tarkhad was there. A few minutes before the train was to start. Mr. Tarkhad asked Ganesh if he would go to Shirdi. On the boy's replying in the affirmative he handed over to him a Railway Ticket saying that one member of this party had not turned up and so the ticket was a surplus. The boy sent word to his mother about his going, with some Thana passenger and proceeded to Shirdi, thanking Baba for the arrangement that He had made for his going to Shirdi and paying his respects to him

How Baba by His supernatural knowledge and merciful nature appeased His angry devotee is also seen in the case of a Rao Bahadur's son-in-law Mr. Joshi of Thana All the members of his family and all his friends had been lucky enough to go to Shirdi and pay their respects to Baba but he was not able to do so. He therefore became angry with Baba and declared that if Baba was really a saint, he would bless him with His sight even without going to Shirdi Nothing was beyond Baba's ken. It seems that He accepted his challenge and satisfied him. When some gentleman from Konkan had gone to Shirdi with his wife and children and was returning home. Baba asked him if he would do a piece of work for Him. When he said, he would do it most willingly, Baba gave him a little packet of His holy ashes and

said, "You go by Mail and give this Holy ash (Udi) packet to him who requests you to give him a span-full space for his accommodation in the train." The gentleman assured Baba he would discharge His trust without fail but that if he met no such gentleman he would immediately write to Him. Assenting to it Baba gave him Udi packet. The gentleman started by Mail but no such gentleman as described by Baba turned up till the train left Kalyan, the gentleman had thought that the train did not stop at Thana and so taking out a postal card he was preparing to write to Baba, when to his surprise the train stopped at Thana and just after the whistle for the train to start had gone, in rushed a gentleman running drenched with perspiration. He approached this Konkani gentleman and said to him. "Please take up this child of yours, and give me a span-full space to sit as I am feeling giddy". The surprised gentleman at once made room for him and handed over to him the little packet of Udi saying that it had been given by Sai Baba for being handed over to a person who asked me for a span-full space in the train. As you fully answered to that description, with great pleasure I give this Shri's packet of holy ashes to you. Mr Joshi most respectfully received it and wondered at Baba's wonderful knowledge and the grace he had conferred on him—His angry child.

Baba showed equal mercy to all His devotees rich or poor. A tailor named Martand of Shirdi fell ill; he was abjectly poor; he had none to look after or serve him. He was lying on the public road Baba passed by that road specially on that day and said to him, "You go to Nanasaheb Dengle of Nimgam, he will look after you, and serve you" When thereupon Martand went there, he was welcomed by Nanasaheb. Nanasaheb told him, "Baba had appeared to him in a dream and asked him to serve Martand tailor sent by Him. So please make this your home, stay here peacefully without worrying, Baba will see to your health Please go on telling me all your needs without reserve etc Through Shri's grace and Nana's careful treatment the tailor soon recovered and resumed his business.

How Baba continues to satisfy the godly desires of His devotees years after He cast off His mortal coil is clearly seen in the case of an Honorary Magistrate of Harda, Shri Krishnarao Narayan Paralkar For several years he had been celebrating Shri Datta festival usually falling in December and feeding a hundred Brahmins on that occasion and whenever for some reason or other he was not able to do so, year after that on the said celebration day, he would feed double the usual number, that is two hundred Brahmins. As per that self-imposed rule, he was to feed two

hundred Brahmins in respect of that celebration in the year 1925. Saturday was fixed for holding this dinner, only when five days were left to it, that is on Monday. On Tuesday when Shri Paralkar was merged in meditation as per his daily routine, he heard a voice saying, "If you desire that on the day you are feeding Brahmins I should come and dine with them, you call Shri Dixit from Bombay". Paralkar however thought to himself, whether it was proper for him to request Shri Dixit to come such a long distance simply for taking a dinner. While he was in the midst of such conflict of thoughts he again heard the voice, "Why are you puzzled? Write to Shri Dixit; feed him along with all the Brahmins, and when you have done so, know it for certain that I have joined the party taking dinner at yours." So Paralkar wrote to Shri Dixit on Wednesday requesting him to attend the dinner on Saturday. Failing to hear from Shri Dixit till all preparations were made for serving the dinner on Saturday, Paralkar with tearful eyes requested Baba to set matters right and then taking his bath, so soon as he started doing his mid-day routine prayers, he got a telegram from Shri Dixit informing him, that he and Madhavrao Deshpande were on their way to Harda. All were gladdened to receive the news; they all went to the station to receive them, accorded them a hearty welcome and gave them a sumptuous feast in the

company of the two hundred Brahmins Shri Paralkar was overjoyed and he now felt that Baba is still there to satisfy all the godly cravings of his heart.



Chapter Ten

BODILY MANIFESTATIONS

A Superman by His will,
Transforms Himself into
Forms numberless at will,
Space He surmounts,
Barriers none to
Block His movements free.

At one with the Universal soul Sai Baba is fully aware of the movements of all, particuarly of all His devotees and prevents all mishaps overcoming them. Three days before one Samvat New year, Sainath was calmly sitting near His fire casting fuel into it; the fire was burning bright when suddenly He thrust His hand into the fire and sat calmly as if nothing had happened. However a servant named Madhav caught sight of this. He as well as Deshpande, who was nearby, ran upto Baba put their arms round Baba's waist and pulled Him away from the fire. Seeing that Baba's hand was nearly burnt, bewailing what had happened they asked Baba why He had purposely and inten-

tionally thrust His hand into the fire. Baba then narrated that while He was in a superconscious state, He saw that at the behest of a blacksmith, his wife with a child on her waist, started blowing the Kiln forgetting the child's being on her waist. The listless child slipped down into the fire: so soon it slipped, I caught it and saved it from instantaneous death; if in so saving the child, my hand has been burnt, it matters very little Baba's devotee Chandorkar knowing of this ran down to Shirdi with a doctor expert, but Baba inspite of the earnest and repeated requests of the doctor and Chandorkar did not unloose the bandage nor showed the hand to the doctor. He however went on getting clarified butter applied to it and getting it covered with a betel leaf and having it bandaged by one leper Bhagoji who was ever in His attendance every morning Some days after burns were all cured; but still massaging His hand with clarified butter, covering it with betel leaf and bandaging the same was allowed to be continued till He cast off His mortal coil, no one knew why.

Long before this Baba had run upto the rescue of one of his devotees' three steamers during the Russo-Japanese War. The devotee Shree Jehangirji Framji Daruwala served as a Captain. When he found that his steamers save three were all sunk by the enemy and that the rest of the steamers including his own would soon meet

the same fate, he took out Baba's photo from his pocket and with tears in his eyes prayed to Baba to save him and his three steamers Baba at once appeared on the scene and towed all the sinking steamers to the bank. Just at the time Daruwala offered up his prayers, Baba bawled out "Ha", and then seated as He was in His usual place in the Dwarkamayi, he had His Kafni and head cloth completely drenched, dripping with water for more than half an hour, with the result that the Dwarkamayi was transformed into a pool of water. The devotees could not understand what all that was; they simply removed water from the Dwarkamayi and dried Baba's clothes. On the third day after this Baba received a telegram from Jehangirji narrating how Baba had saved him and offering Him a thousand thanks for his marvellous rescue of himself and the three steamers with passengers Immediately on his return to India he came and paid his respects to Baba He has retired now from his service. but in appreciation of his services, Goverudment has provided him with some job. He is taking keen interest in Baba's affairs even to-day Lately he donated about two thousand two hundred rupees in two instalments and got the 'Mandap' of Dwarkamayi repaired to his satisfaction

When once Nanasaheb Chandorkar, who was in Shirdi, went to Kopergaon to have a bath in the

holy Godawari on the occasion of an eclipse and paid a four anna piece to a Pariah, Baba at that very time showed to the devotees sitting near Him a four ann piece, stating that He had received that four anna piece from Nana. When Nanasaheb returned to Shirdi and those devotees inquired of him what he had spent in charity at the time of the eclipse and he corroborated Baba's statement of his having paid a four anna piece to a Pariah, the devotees as well as Nana felt assured that, Baba though present in Shirdi, had actually gone to receive Nana's charity by his supernatural yogic powers

With the supernatural knowledge that Baba had He saw the devotees' calamities ahead and took all the steps to ward them off. Nanasaheb's daughter Menatai suffered from excruciating delivery pain and so they all remembered Baba and prayed for her safe and immediate delivery. How could Baba be ignorant of His devotee's trouble? When therefore one Ramgir (whom Baba called Bapugir) asked Baba's permission to return to his native country Khandesh, Baba asked him to go to Jamner on the way and deliver to Nana a packet of Udi He was giving, and a copy prayer for his daily recitation Ramgir said, "I have only two rupees on hand; how would it be possible for me to cover the expenses of going there?" Baba said, "Don't worry; you will have all arrangements

made for you." With full faith in Baba's words, Ramgir therefore left Shirdi and booked a ticket for Jalgaon for Rs. 1/14, as in those days there were no Rãilway lines upto Jamner. Now Ramgir had only a balance of two annas, so he wondered how he would reach Jamner with that little balance. When however he got down at Jalgaon Railway station he found an office Patewala shouting, "Who is Bapugir of Shirdi, who is Bapugir of Shirdi?" Hearing this Bapugir told him he was the person he wanted. Then the peon said, "I am waiting for you, Nanasaheb has sent a Tonga to carry you to Jamner. So please come on, I will take you to Jamner". So Bapu started in the Tonga at about mid-night. The Patewala stopped his Tonga in the morning near a stream to water his horses and to give them a little rest. The Patewala washed his face, asked Bapugir to do the same and then said, "Looking here, Nanasaheb has given me sweets for breakfast, so let us have our breakfast. Bapugir consented and they had their breakfast. After breakfast they resumed their journey and reached Jamner. Just at the entrance into the town Nanasaheb's office was sighted, so the Patewalla halted his Tonga to rest his horses. Bapugir also got down to pass water. Returning thereafter to the spot where he had left the Tonga, Bapugir stood amazed at the sight. There was no Tonga, neither the Patewalla. Nanasaheb's house

was very near and he found it on the people showing the same to him He saw Nanasaheb and told him "Baba had sent for him a copy prayer for recitation and Holy ashes' packet. Here they are" Just at that time his daughter was passing through a critical stage of delivery and was fainting but as soon as Nana recited the prayer and his wife dropping the holy ashes in a cup of water raised it to the daughter's lips, the daughter was immediately relieved of all pains and had a safe delivery. Nana's anxious moments were now over and his whole family was once again assured of Baba' unceasing care and protection of all of them. When the crisis had been tided over, Bapugir asked Nanasaheb, "How is it that the Patewalla, who brought me the Tonga and the breakfast you had sent, is not seen here at all? Nanasaheb was taken aback by the inquiry Bapugir made and said, "Oh what do you say, I knew nothing at all of your coming, so how could I have sent a tonga and breakfast for you with my Patewalla?" Nanasaheb at once understood that Baba by His supernatural powers had transformed Himself into the tonga, horses, Patewalla, etc.; and brought Bapugir to his house just in time to save his daughter and Nanasaheb's eyes streamed with joyful tears.

Another time when Nanasaheb went on a pilgrimage to Harishchandra mountain and had gone only half-way, his throat was parched by

thirst, he felt exhausted and said to his companions, "I can't walk a step further without water, had my Sai Baba been here, he would have given me water, (just at that time Baba in Shirdi said to the devotees near Him: Nana is dying of thirst but would I see him dying that way?) His companions tried to persuade Nana to stand up and try moving forward as his Sai Baba was not there to help him. Just at the time a Bhil with a bundle of fuel on his head appeared on the scene and on inquiry he informed Nanasaheb that just under the stone Nana was sitting on, there was a stream of pure water, so Nana's companions removed the stone and as stated by the Bhil they found there a stream of water; they all quenched their thirst and then reached the mountain top and completed the pilgrimage Several days thereafter when Nanasaheb went to Shirdi, he was asked by some devotees whether he had to pass through some critical situation some time back, for Baba had so declared here; referring to his diary he found that Baba had referred to the crisis he had to face on the Harishchandra mountain and Baba there had saved him by taking up the form of Bhil carrying a pile of fagots on his head

Baba similarly saved another devotee Udhavesh by supplying him water in the form of a Goswami, when he had fainted away on Girnar

and when thereafter he went to Shirdi Baba had told him he had supplied water to him.

To prevent a devotee from committing an error ruinous to his health and to preach a lesson of kindness towards all creatures by showing his oneness with them, Baba assumed the forms of a dog, and a cat several times. We shall mention here only two such instances. A tea merchant of Bombay suffering from Asthama went to Shirdi with his wife, hired a house and attended upon Baba twice a day for the cure of his disease. Baba once and again advised him not to take curds and his wife accordingly tried her best to persuade him to refrain from the use of the curds, but Hansraj found it impossible for him to take his dinner without curds, so he ordered his wife to keep curds ready Obeying the husband the wife always kept curds ready. To force him to do without the curds, Baba assuming the form of a cat, always devoured it when the couple was away for attending noon Arti prayers at the Dwarkamayi. When Hansraj saw this, with a view to detect and punish the thief robbing him of his pet food, with a stick in hand instead of attending the noon prayers at the Dwarkamayi as usual, he sat at home watching. Just when the noon prayers started at the Dwarkamayi, Hansraj found a cat going up the loft devouring the curds; he allowed the cat to finish the curds and then as she was leaving the house he

gave her a severe stick stroke, leaving on her body a mark of the same. When in the afternoon Hansraj as usual went to Dwarkamayi and paid his respects to Baba, Baba uncovered His back and showed a weal on it to the devotees there inclusive of Hansraj, stating that, that was the reward this perverse Hansraj had awarded Him Hansraj realised the mistake he had been committing and since that day gave up curds.

Similarly when the venerable old devotee of Baba, Mhalasapati gave a stroke or two to a dog entering into his house, leaving the marks thereof on his body, Baba showed Mhalasapati the said marks on His own body, since that day Mhalasapati gave up inflicting such cruelty on dogs tresspassing upon his house.

When Dev Mamlatdar of Dehnu invited Baba to attend the dinner party he had at his house in respect of a religious festival, He informed him that he would attend the same with two others. On the day fixed Baba saw Dev, informed him He with His companions wanted dinner. Not recognising Him he asked them to come exactly at 12 noon. So Baba went there with his two companions, took dinner and then taking betel leaf etc., left When Dev wrote to Jog saying though Baba had promised him, He did not attend the dinner, without even hearing the contents of the letter, He asked Jog to write to him in reply, "Baba did

attend with two others; why did you invite Me if you had not the insight to recognise Me? This Baba would rather sacrifice His life than break a promise once given."

Assuming also the form of an old man Sai Baba prescribed to Shri Upasani Maharaj warm water for the cure of his breathing disorder: this cured him and when Shri Upasani went to Shirdi thereafter Sai Baba had reminded him of the same

Even after leaving His body Baba has been protecting His devotees by manifesting Himself in several forms A few of the numerous such instances may now be cited.

One Sheth Ratilal Chamanlal Shah of Ahmedabad carrying on business at Adoni (Madras) left Adoni for Ahmedabad on the morning of 22-5-48 in a second class compartment with his wife. He had with him ornaments and cash worth about 10 to 12 thousands. There were in the same compartment Shri K. M Munshi's son Jagdish with his wife and also Shri Gopalrao, the President of the Cotton Market Committee and Shri Naidu, the Central Bank Agent. Till about 4 P.M. all these passengers passed their time merrily in playing cards An undefinable fear however then suddenly seized Shri Ratilal, and so he dissociated himself from the rest of the passengers playing cards and sat chanting Shri Sai's name.

These passengers tried to set at rest Ratilal's (what they considered to be his) baseless fear, but he turned a deaf ear to all of them, continuing taking Shri's name But half an hour had hardly passed and they sighted Gangapur Railway station, when they were disillusioned, for then to their dismay they found a band of armed Razakars ready to pounce upon their train. As the train was just coming to a halt at Gangapur they seized the Railway Station Master, bound him to a station pillar with a rope and started their ruthless campaign of harassing, looting and killing passengers Shri Ratilal's companions also, finding no other way of escape from this attack, started chanting Sai Baba's name, shutting fast their windows and doors; then these passengers saw from doors' crevices that a Pathan standing close to their compartment was directing the Razakars to proceed either left or right leaving them and their own compartment safe unrobbed, unscathed. They were all thus saved simply by chanting Shri's name. The Razakars had not their attention drawn to this compartment through Shri's grace. Need it be said that they then all heartily thanked Baba for their miraculous escape from this danger?

Again one Shri S. B. Nachne's little son of about nine months, named Harihar alias Sai Nath was playing with his brothers and sisters. Other grown up children had been firing crackers near-

by igniting coloured matches. One of these threw a burning match on the child's clothes. Sai Nath's clothes caught fire but the little boy could not understand the risk this involved. The mother was busy doing something outside there but her mind was away from her children. So Baba appeared at once before her in the form of a Fakir and pointing to the burning child said, "Look there, see what is going on there." Thereupon the mother at once ran upto the child removed its burning clothes in proper time. After Harihar was thus saved, the mother looked for the Fakir but during the confusion that followed on the running of the mother to the child, He disappeared altogether, no one knew where. The devout parents of Harihar rightly attributed this to Shri Baba's grace and prayed for such anxious care of them whenever so required.

The self-same Nachne lost his wife in 1929. She had died leaving a three years old child. This almost broke Nachne's heart; and so he became so very listless to the necessities of his body that when he left Bombay for Nasik to perform the obsequial ceremonies of his wife, though it was dreary cold, he took neither a blanket nor a shawl to guard himself against it. Though he grew listless about himself, Baba could not be so; like an anxious father that He is, He assumed the form of an office peon and perched Himself just opposite

to the seat, which Nachne was to occupy in the train. When Nachne got into that compartment and sat down He started asking "Well, where are you going? How is it you have no bedding?" Nachne replied, "I am going to Nasik to perform the obsequial ceremony of my wife. I have now grown quite indifferent to my body, and care very little for the bedding." Hearing this the Patewalla (Peon) sent a friend of his to get a blanket for Nachne Seeing that he brought the blanket in no time, Nachne remarked, "Oh it seems you live very near." The Patewalla replied, "I am a Patewalla (a peon) in Bombay Arts School and my quarters are very near. My name is Ganpatishanker. My Saheb has gone to Simla, so I have seized this opportunity for going to Nasik. If you now want to go to sleep, I will wake you up in proper time you may do so. However if you have any cash, beware of pick-pockets; if you have nothing to keep the cash safe, and if you hand it over to me, give it to me. I'll keep it safe in my trunk." Nachne thereupon gave over his cash to Ganpatishanker and slept. Ganpati woke him up at Ghoty; they there washed their face and had tea. Ganpati defrayed the expenses of tea. Then they got down on Nasik Railway Station. On the way to Nasik proper in a bus Ganpatishanker said to Nachne, "Do not go to any of these Brahmin priests, they will charge you exorbitantly. I will make all arrangements for the ceremonies; come with me."

Saying so, he brought to him a priest, explained to the priest what and how these ceremonies had to be performed. He also pointed to Nachne a cavity in the river and asked him to stand there dipping his wife's bones there in water. As Nachne did so the bones melted away like sugar in water. As soon as the ceremonies were all over, Ganpatishanker received a telegram from His Master asking Him to resume His duties So he took Nachne's permission to leave, gave over to him the account of Nachne's money spent by Him to the very pie, handed over to him the balance and left Nachne saying, "I will meet you in Andheri" On return to Bombay Nachne made all efforts to find him out but he could not succeed He then made inquiries at the Art School, asked the Patewallas, the Professors and even the Principal, but when all of them gave one uniform reply "that there is no such peon and there was never in the service of this Art School a peon of the name of Ganpatishanker," he realised that the peon was none other than Baba Himself He Himself had for him assumed the form of a patewalla to relieve him of the stunning stroke of the misery of his wife's death and to assist him in the performance of the obsequial ceremonies He felt extremely sorry that he had got Baba to discharge a menial's duty for him — but he was now helpless and could only requite Him by his steady and unfalling devotion for Him

Chapter Eleven

REFORM AND REGENERATION

Change in out look,
On human life, life values,
Reform and Regeneration,
For Life Divine,
Is major portion
Of the life work
Of a Real Superman

Many and mysterious are the ways a superman adopts for the regeneration, reform and amelioration of this world. It is proposed to describe a few of the many such methods of Sai Baba known to the devotees; for it must be admitted that it is not possible for any one to claim a perfect knowledge of all of these.

It is righty said that an ounce of action is better than tons of speeches. Shri Sainath seems to have strictly followed the truth inculcated in this adage. He made no speeches but he led a life, which in itself was a lesson to the many who had the eyes to see and study. One Mrs. Chhotubai Pradhan once remarked, "If we minutely observe Baba we would find as if He had two personalities, the one was completely merged as it were in God ever chanting His name while the other personality at the same time seemed to be

busy looking after the devotees' welfare, speaking to them, and moving about like ordinary man." Whatever that may be, His daily routine in itself was a sufficient lesson and guide to all sincere aspirants of God. His life teaches one great lesson—namely, that not a minute, nay not even a second should be allowed to pass without the remembrance of the all-kind, all-powerful God. He ónce said to Shri Mhalasapati, His night attendant, to keep his hand on His heart and to wake Him up so soon as he ceased hearing the name of God being chanted there. Then there are accounts of how Baba, Mhalasapati and Tatya Patil rested at the Dwarkamayi for the night and how Baba would not allow any one of them to go to sleep. What in fact He wanted to preach thereby was that sleep should be avoided as far as possible and that the time unnecessarily spent in it should be utilised in prayers and remembrance of God. There are devotees who rightly believe that He never had any sleep at night. His daily routine was equally instructive. He left His bed of gunny bag and coarse cloth pieces with a bed sheet over it of the same cloth at about 5 a m. After easing Himself and washing His mouth, He sat leaning against a Dhuni Pillar meditating for nearly two hours. Then coming out of the Dwarkamayi with slow steps He went upto the Chowdi and thence upto the back door or Naval-

kar's wada (Guru Paduka Temple), saying prayers; He then returned to the Dwarkamayi in the same manner muttering prayers. Occupying His usual seat for a while taking a Chillam puff with His leprous servant at about 8 a.m., He would wash His face and hands upto the elbow with tender care fearing lest He should in that act displace or tear off His skin-hair and then with a Dhoti dangling down His shoulders and with a tumbler in hand He would go to the five houses He had fixed upon for alms. He would receive the Jwari breads in His dhoti and vegetables and all, liquids in the tumbler. Returning to the Dwarkamayi He would offer a part of His bread alms to the Holy fire as oblation and then have His breakfast After breakfast and meeting His devotees and speaking to them at times in parables He would leave for Lendi, (which later on He developed into Mr Pradhan's garden) accompanied by His leper servant. The leper servant carried a tumber of water in his hand, and in later life He had on each side a devotee holding His arms to assist Him. He spent about an hour or more there and then returned to the Dwarkamayi where till twelve noon He received all the devotees allowing them to pay their respects to Him in their own way, without allowing any one else to disturb them in this—their worship. Then followed the arti —the waving of lights. After distributing the several

dishes of food received from devotees, He would spend some time with the devotees and then bade them adieu giving to each His holy ashes, applying the same to their forehead and blessing them keeping His hand on the head of each. Thereafter He again came out, went upto the Chowdi and thence to Guru Paduka temple muttering prayers as in the morning. Later in life He also went to Lendi in the noon at about 2-00 p.m. in the same way as in the morning, and returned at about 3-00 or 3-30 P.M. He closed the day by going up to the Chowdi thence to Guru Paduka Mandir muttering prayers as in the morning, with this difference that returning from Guru Paduka Mandir, He would stand facing west to receive the respects of all the devotees there; and when that was over He would stand at the compound wall asking people to go with a wave of His hand Baba took particular care to see that the Holy fire He had started kept burning without a break and at times He therefore asked the devotees to provide faggots for the same.

He strictly followed the above routine without a break till almost the last day of His worldly existence. It is said that only during the last two or three days owing to His failing health He omitted going to Lendi. Now let us ponder a while and see what this routine of His wants to teach. A person of perfect realisation as He was,

He had nothing to gain or lose by carrying on these religious practices and yet he carried them on to set a lesson to others (B. Gita III-22 to 25). His Dhuni—Holy fire—that He kept ceaselessly burning reminds the Hindus of a pure Brahmin's Agnihotra and the Parsis of their Fire-temple Both these keep the fire ever burning He meditated, prayed, offered oblations to fire, went in seclusion at Lendi for about 2 hours a day, and not only that but He has asked some of His devotees to offer such oblations before taking food This part of His routine seems to show that He wanted His devotees to adopt all the three ways of Gnan, Bhakti and Karma (knowledge, devotion and action) for attaining Godhood or the Realisation of Soul A fortnight before He left His body He got a devotee to read out to him Ram Vijay (a holy book of Hindus) for 12 days showing how a person should die

Besides the example that He set to others by His own life, He had for the devotees' welfare a most potent and effective weapon in the form of the holy ashes of the ceaselessly burning fire. He had kindled. In His light mood He sang "The sportive R[illegible] has descended on earth bringing with [illegible] [illegible]illed with holy ashes." What He sang [illegible] to be verbatim true [illegible] exp[illegible] [illegible]is devotees had ashes [illegible] paralysis, [illegible]

Typhoid, Eczema, Hair lice, Boils, Bladder Stones. Small pox, Appendicitis, intestine troubles, insommia, serpent and scorpion poisoning and all sorts of other diseases left their prey so soon as these ashes were administered to the sufferers. Not only human beings but also animals such as cows and buffaloes of devotees were cured of their diseases by these ashes These ashes have proved successful even in knotty cases of pregnancy and delivery Even though Shri has left His body, the holy ashes of the fire that He had lighted and has been kept burning as yet endow the same cure and benefits to His devotees as they did when He was in body. Another such weapon that He used for His devotees' welfare was His demands of money gifts By such demands, sometimes He merely indicated the benefits that the devotee had received or was to receive. Thus Baba once demanded a sum of Rs. 50/- each from the late R. B H. V Sathe and Shri Daji H Lele when each had received a promotion of Rs. 50/- in his salary. In another case he demanded the exact sum of the promotion the Gazette had announced

Another time when one Narvekar was laid up with fever he sent his son Vamanrao to Baba with a sum of Rs. 500/-. On Baba's receiving the said sum Baba was laid up with that fever and Narvekar got rid of that fever. Seeing this Vamanrao felt uneasy about Baba's health when

Baba solaced him saying "He would soon get over the fever." Very soon Baba's temperatute became normal to the agreeable surprise of Vamanrao.

It may be noted however that Baba did not demand money from all those who visited Him. Very often He would decline the money offered. If the money sum demanded was not given or refused, He would not on that account change His usual kind and parental treatment of that devotee. Again very often He strictly followed the rule prohibiting hoarding Very often He received very very large sums of money but by evening He would defray the whole of that amount reserving nothing for the next day. He gave away all that He had obtained during the day to fit and deserving persons and at times even got some religious ceremonies performed for the benefits of the donors of those sums without letting the donors know how He was defraying their amounts. The Police constable on the spot wondered, how Baba did not fail to make His minimum daily disbursements of about Rs. 80/- (eighty) eventhough he did not at times receive that amount, and though every evening He had nothing left with Him for the morrow.

To draw the attention of a devotee to a certain religious principle of truth Baba would repeatedly demand the same sum from a devotee every time that He visited Him, nothing less, nothing more. This would set the devotee a-think-

ing and lead him to ask Baba what He meant to convey. Baba would then say what actually He wanted to teach him.

Every time Raghuvir Bhasker Purandare visited Baba, He demanded only two Rupees from him. He could not understand why Baba asked for that fixed sum; so one day he requested Baba to explain to him what He meant by the Rupees Two He had been ever demanding from him. Baba at once replied, "I do not want these coins, I want the first Rupee of absolute FAITH and a Rupee of PATIENCE." Purandare at once said, "Baba, I have already given these to you." "No you have not done so, your faith has been wavering; henceforth stick to truth. Be always truthful. If only you act upto this principle in life, rest assured I shall ever be with you."

From another devotee the late Shri Narke He had been always demanding a sum of Rs. 15/- every time he went to Baba at Shirdi Narke had then just returned from Europe and was at Shirdi, without a job, for about a year and still Baba asked him to donate Fifteen Rupees every day So one day Narke humbly said to Baba, "Baba you know I am here so many months without a job, entirely dependent on my father-in-law Shrimant Booty; you have been seeing the worn-out almost tattered clothes I have been pulling on with. In

these circumstances how do you expect me to give you such a sum of Rupees Fifteen?" Baba told him in reply, "I know your condition thoroughly well, but you are at present reading Yog Vasisth Maha Ramayana. I want from you that you should fix in your mind the great principles therein propounded; live upto them, though living in this world you should not get entangled in the world and worldly objects Ever be non-attached."

A third devotee Uddhavesh of Dehnu, also had a lesson taught to him under circumstances of a different type. We have seen how his purse with all his money and steamer tickets had slipped down from his hands into the mid-ocean while he was on his way to Dwarka, with a party of friends His mind was greatly ruffled, so to restore it to equanimity he thereafter took out his Kunte's Gnaneshwari and started reading it; he however was not able to understand it at all, so he closed the book and took a vow that unless Baba asked him to read Gnaneshwari he would not read it Though on return from Dwarka he went to Shirdi to pay his respects to Baba, Baba said nothing to him about it at the time. Later on however Baba called him to Shirdi; and for the first ten days He always asked him to pay Him Rupees eleven. Uddhavesh went on paying the said sum for ten days; when on the eleventh day Baba again asked him to pay eleven Rupees he said, "I have already

dedicated to you my eleven senses (Five senses of knowledge, five of action and one mind)." Baba replied, "Who are you to give me these, they are already mine. Baba now saw that Uddhavesh had his mind then drawn away from material things to his own self, so he asked him to fetch from Bapu Saheb Jog, Eknathi Bhagwat and when the said book was brought to Him, He turned over a few pages, opened the book at the eleventh Chapter thereof and asked him to read it care fully. He also asked him to read the book daily saying, it was a Brindaban Book wherein He Himself was talking to him (Uddhav) etc.

Once while Shri Dixit was reading with a few devotees, a well known verse on the dedication of senses from Eknathi Bhagwat to draw Dixit's attention to the one more internal sense of human body mentioned by Eknath in his commentary, He sent Shrimant Booty to Shri Dixit to fetch from him Rupees sixteen and a half. Dixit at once understood that Baba did not want from him the material coins but that He was drawing his attention to the several senses mentioned in the verse he was reading. Counting up these senses however the total he arrived at was fifteen and a half, at first in this way; Body-1 speech-1 mind-1 senses-10, Intellect-1, Egoism-1, and Prakriti one's own nature-1/2 = 15½. These were all that were mentioned in the verse; so Kaka Dixit was at

a loss to understand why instead of 15½ Rupees Baba had demanded 16½; so he got up. stood before Baba's photo he had and prayed for the solution of his difficulty; at once it occured to him that Eknath's commentary should be referred to for this purpose, doing so, he found that Eknath had mentioned one more sense viz. Chitta, the sense of thinking though there was no mention of the same in the verse itself; adding this to the 15½ above mentioned, Shri Dixit found to his joy the propriety of Baba's demand for 16½ Rupees.

Another time Baba asked Kakasaheb Dixit to pay Rs. 100/- when Kakasaheb was a bit puzzled on reading illustrations of these two types in Vedantic texts: (1) The world is described as a mirage on a desert land; also it is said—it is like the deceptive appearance of a serpent in a string. (2) Name and form should not be given any importance; it is the matter—substratum that matters; that is the most important thing to look at, not the forms and names Kakasaheb said though ornaments and their various names may be discarded, gold does exist; earthern pots may be disregarded and yet earth is there; so in one form or another matter does exist; how can it be supposed then, that the world is a mirage? On praying to Baba before the photo he had, he hit upon the right solution of his difficulties. It

was this:— Vedantic texts do not mean to say that the world does not exist at all; it simply says it does exist in a sense, it is everchanging, assuming limitless numberless forms and names but the substratum, the thing-in-itself Reality, does not vanish, does not change; its support, its absolutely necessary for this changing phenomenal world; the phenomena cannot exist without—this noumena. This noumena is the real one that runs through the whole universe. While the phenomenal world of forms and names being ever changing has not that existence which Reality has. Vedantic texts therefore declare that this ever changing phenomenal world of names does not exit at all. Whatever does not exist is as good as a zero. The phenomenal world mainly consists of two such Zeros of names and forms. Thus Reality and phenomenal world of names and forms = 00 make up Rs. 100/- the sum that Baba had asked for Kaka Saheb was mightily pleased when this truth dawned upon him on Baba's significant demand for Rs. 100/ .

Conclusion

We have now said enough to convince the reader of Shri Sainath being a superman, wielding supernatural powers for the material and spiritual welfare of His devotees. We have seen how by His order He stopped the crumbling ceiling of His Dwarkamayi till He had finished His meals, how he checked fire from working havoc in the devotee's fields, how he kept burning for the whole night lamps with water in place of oil, how he checked stormy rains to save Shirdi people with their cattle and to enable His devotees to return home in comfort, how he assumed the forms of deities of gods, goddesses and the late deceased Acharya's (Master) form to satisfy the pious minded devotees of His, how he thrust His hand into the fire and saved a child slipping down into a blacksmith's kiln, how He ran upto the rescue of a steamer Captain in the mid-sea and saved him and his steamers, how He saved His devotees from dying of thirst, how He saved devotees' children sinking in ditches and from burning, how He helped a frustrated man suffering from disappointment by serving him as Patewalla etc etc Is it possible for an ordinary finite human being to do all this or any of these? You will certainly agree with me and say from all these that unless a man has ceased to be a finite human

being and attained perfect realisation it is not possible for him to do what Sai Baba did and the wonderful part of Him is that though He cast off His body as far back as 1918, even to-day His devotees have been getting the same type of His beneficial experiences. They at times visibly see Him, speak to Him, obtain help and guidance from Him in need, nay some of them have been feeling He is ever with them taking care of them and watching their actions and interests. Nothing more needs be said to prove that He was a Superman, of supernatural powers who manifested Himself upon this earth for the benefit of the whole living world irrespective of their genera, species, castes, creeds or religions.

And in conclusion let me say with the late Revered Shri Bhagwandas,

Since we have learnt the alphabet of Love,
None other text than this can we repeat;
With the heart's eyes, wide-opened now behold,
Whatever Thou see-est, as but form of His !'
Since we have seen the secret past the Screen,
With every breath the song springs to our lips;
Whatever Thou see-est now with the heart's eyes
Thou know'st is but a form Divine;

One Cosmic Brotherhood,
One Universal God,
One Source, One sway,

One Law beholding Us,
One Purpose moulding Us,
One Life en-folding Us
In Love always

Lust, Greed, Fear, Pride, Envy and Hate,

Long made us Desolate
Their reign is done.
Race, Color, Creed and Caste,
Fade with the Nightmare Past,
Man wakes to learn at last,
All Life is One !

May peace and prosperity return among Men,
May co-operation unite them. Love bind them,
Brotherhood entold them Patience possess them

Self-control strengthen them,
The Past be forgiven them,
The Future be sanctified from them.

May Peace and prosperity return to them !

AMIN ! AMEN ! AUM TAT SAT